Fishy networks:

Uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

October 2022

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Acknowledgements

Lakshmi Kumar (Global Financial Integrity), Claudia Helms (Global Financial Integrity), Adrián Falco (Fundación SES) and Ibrahim Khan for their expert advice and input into the report.

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Design: Pietro Bruni - toshi.ltd

Credit cover illustration: OPM Design Group

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIS	Automatic identification system
AML	Anti-money laundering
BO	Beneficial Owner
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EJF	Environmental Justice Foundation
DWF	Distant water fleet
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FiTI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
FOC	Flag of Convenience
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSMA	Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing
RFMO	Regional fisheries management organisations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

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1. Introduction

Fisheries play a fundamental role in feeding people across the world and creating jobs in coastal communities, as well as preserving aquatic and ocean biodiversity. This sector alone provides livelihoods to around 820 million people worldwide, many of whom are women, with some regions like West Africa having a quarter of its jobs depend to fisheries.[01] Fish consumption also accounts for a sixth of the global population's intake of animal proteins, and more than half in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka.[02]

Fisheries play a fundamental role in feeding people across the world and creating jobs in coastal communities, as well as preserving aquatic and ocean biodiversity

However, this vital resource is under extreme strain. Over 90 percent of assessed marine fish stocks remain fully exploited, overexploited or depleted, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).[03] Out of these, a third of fish stocks were classified as overfished, in a "continuous increasing trend". The reasons for overfishing are a combination of legal over exploitation of fisheries, the lack of regulation concerning fishing practices that destroy the habitat, combined with illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing that in many instances is a crime, and we consider it to constitute an Illicit Financial Flow (IFF) in all cases as it fits the definition of IFFs according to the UNODC-UNCTAD Conceptual framework for the measurement of illicit financial flows which include illicit tax and commercial aspects in the conceptual framework.[04]

IUU fishing represents 20 percent of the global fish catch, playing an important role in overfishing.[05]The greatest declines in fish stocks are expected to happen in coastal regions which are most food insecure and more dependent on artisanal fishing for protein. In addition to overfishing, climate change is expected to impact global South coastal communities the most since, with rising ocean temperatures fish populations will migrate away from the tropics, with fisheries near the poles likely to see an expansion of available biomass whereas those in tropical regions will see greater declines. In other words. FAO predicting that the maximum catch within the

01 FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture *https://www.fao.org/rural-employment/agricultural-sub-sectors/fisheries-and-aquaculture/en/*

02 FAO. 2020. ***The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action.*** Rome. *https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en*

03 FAO. 2020. ***The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action.*** Rome. *https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en*

04 UNODC-UNCTAD (2022) 'Conceptual framework for the statistical measurement of illicit financial flows' https://unctad.org/webflyer/conceptual-framework-statistical-measurement-illicit-financial-flows

05 Pew. (27 August 2013) *https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2013/08/27/faq-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing#:~:text=It%20is%20difficult%20to%20measure,of%20the%20global%20seafood%20catch.*

world's exclusive economic zones (EEZs) will decrease between 2.8 and 12.1 percent by 2050. [06] Meanwhile as carcasses of large marine fish sink and sequester carbon in the deep ocean, fish stocks also help mitigate climate change.[07]

IUU fishing is the third most lucrative natural resource crime after timber and mining

In this report we focus on IUU fishing, which accounts for as much as one fifth of the global fisheries catch, with conservative estimates placing the value of the illicit trade anywhere between USD $10 billion to USD $23.5 billion[08] every year, while another study put the scale between USD $15.5 billion and up to USD $36.4 billion[09] with overall economic losses estimated to be USD $50 billion[10], making this the third most lucrative natural resource crime after timber and mining.[11] This global figure can also be compared to national level estimates, where Argentina estimated IUU fishing losses in terms of IUU fishing catch per year, [12]while Chile estimates its losses at USD $397 million per year[13] and Indonesia at USD $4 billion per year[14] equivalent to the country's annual net rubber exports.[15] Most countries do not publish loss estimates.

48.9 percent of IUU vessels were found in Africa, leading to losses of up to USD $11.49 billion in Illicit Financial Flows

Of this global figure of upto USD $23.5 billion, of upto USD $23.5 billion this report, based on the most extensive analysis of IUU cases to date, that 48.9 percent of all IUU vessels for which there is data where offenses took place were found in Africa, leading to an economic loss of Illicit Financial Flows alone of up to USD $11.49 billion originating from the continent due to IUU fishing. The most affected sub-region is West Africa, where 40 percent of the global IUU fishing took place with a loss of up to USD $9.4 billion in Illicit Financial Flows. This compares with other studies that found that IUU represents 37 percent of total seafood catches in West Africa, putting at risk millions of people's livelihoods and the food security of the whole region.[16] Tax revenues losses depend on tax regimes (mainly corporate taxes, royalties, and export taxes), but could be up to 20 percent of the total.

06 Kelman, J.H.C.. "Why Climate Change and State Subsidies Will Collide to Create Fishery Conflict." Journal of Strategic Security 13, no. 4 (2020) : 96-108. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.13.4.1869 Available at: *https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jss/vol13/iss4/7*

07 *https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abb4848*

08 Agnew, D.J., Pearce, J., Pramod, G., Peatman, T., Watson, R., Beddington, J.R. and Pitcher, T.J. (2009) 'Estimating the worldwide extent of illegal fishing', PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570 Plos One Journal. *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

09 May, C. (2017) 'Transnational Crime and the Developing World' https://secureservercdn.net/166.62.106.54/34n.8bd.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Transnational_Crime-final.pdf

10 Sumaila, U.R., Zeller, D., Hood, L., Palomares, M.L.D., Li, Y. and Pauly, D. Illicit trade in marine fish catch and its effects on ecosystems and people worldwide. Science Advances (26 February 2020). *https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aaz3801* f

11 Reid, A., Dury-Agri, J.R., Brush, A., Copeland, D. (4 June 2021) 'The Role of Beneficial Ownership in Combating IUU Fishing'. RUSI. https://shoc.rusi.org/blog/the-role-of-beneficial-ownership-in-combating-iuu-fishing/

12 Parlamentario.com Stefani: "La pesca ilegal genera una pérdida entre 1000 y 2600 millones de dólares para nuestro país" (7 February 2022) https://www.parlamentario.com/2022/02/07/stefani-la-pesca-ilegal-genera-una-perdida-entre-1000-y-2600-millones-de-dolares-para-nuestro-pais/

13 Torrico, G. South America plans regional response tos quid overfishing. China Dialogue Ocean (13 January 2021) *https://chinadialogueocean.net/en/fisheries/15979-squid-overfishing-south-america-plans-regional-response/*

14 Orlowski, A. Indonesia's explosive IUU policy is working, new report. Seafood Source (21 May 2018) https://www.seafoodsource.com/features/indonesias-explosive-iuu-policy-is-working-new-report-says

15 World's Top Exports. https://www.worldstopexports.com/indonesias-top-10-exports/

16 Agnew DJ, Pearce J, Pramod G, Peatman T, Watson R, et al., "Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing" (Marine Resources Action Group and University of British Columbia, 2009). Plos One Journal. *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

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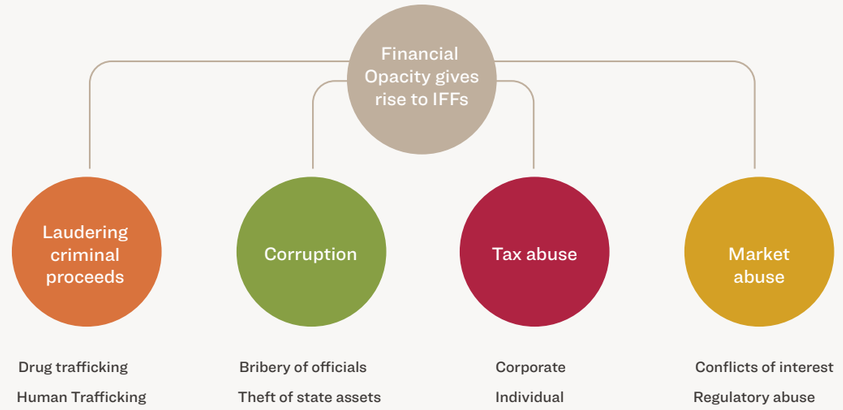
Treating IUU fishing as an illicit financial flow

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is defined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU)[17]. It was adopted in 2001 and sets a framework for states to cooperate. Firstly, Illegal fishing is a direct violation of state laws or their obligations to other states. Secondly, unreported fishing involves trade mis-invoicing or false invoicing, where the quantity of the catch is misreported or not reported at all. Finally, unregulated fishing takes place operating outside of the legal framework, or when legal frameworks have mismatches.

These are all Illicit Financial Flows as defined by the UN SDG 16.4.1.[18] which mainly focuses on two pillars of both corruption and illicit markets, as well as tax abuses and tax evasion by corporate actors and wealthy individuals in terms of statistical methodologies for measuring IFFs. Furthermore, in the African context the African Union and UN ECA High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows[19] discusses four types of IFFs, as seen in Figure 1.

The illegal fishing aspects of IUU fishing can be categorised as laundering of criminal proceeds while also evading taxes on the catch. Meanwhile unregulated fishing is a type of a market abuse where regulatory regimes don't adequately cover illicit activities. We still consider it abusive and thus the unregulated volumes count towards Illicit Financial Flows related to IUU fishing. Based on this comparison of frameworks, we should also highlight the high prevalence of corruption as an enabler of IUU fishing, while also considering that tax abuses by fisheries companies engaged in legal fishing also contribute towards IFFs even if not recognised in the IUU framework.[20]

From this angle, anti-money laundering (AML) and tax abuse related measures are key to combatting IUU fishing. This requires greater collaboration between authorities implementing AML and tax rules and laws to define the fishing industry as a high-risk sector for these offences, and to impose transparency requirements on making beneficial owners public. Also fishing should be classified as an extractive industry, and brought to similar safeguards and reporting requirements as other extractive industries to require enhanced reporting and lower thresholds for country-by-country reporting, reporting all contracts between governments, and disclosing landed catch. Public beneficial ownership registries should also treat fisheries as a high-risk extractive industry, with accurate disclosures on the beneficial owners of vessels and their owners. Even in countries without Beneficial Ownership Transparency (BOT), specific high-risk sectors that should include the fishing sector should have BOT.



17 FAO Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. *https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/what-is-iuu-fishing/en/*

18 SDG Indicator Metadata https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-16-04-01.pdf

19 UNECA: Illicit financial flows: report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa (2015) https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/22695

20 UN Financial Integrity for Sustainable Development (FACTI) report. (February 2021) https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5e0bd9edab846816e263d633/602e91032a209d0601ed4a2c_FACTI_Panel_Report.pdf

Supply chain transparency initiatives can have an important impact on reducing the scope for IUU fishing as the global trade is driven by overconsumption of fish in key consumer countries including Europe, USA, Japan and China which often heavily subsidise their distant water fishing fleets. Some estimates indicate that as much as 15 percent of fish entering the European Union, the world's largest seafood market which has the most advanced IUU regulations, comes from illegal practices[21], a similar percentage to the United States and equivalent to more than USD $2 billion a year.[22] These are likely to be underestimates given the lack of data about the illicit activity.

The study confirms that this activity affects especially low-income countries which have more limited capacities on the law enforcement, anti-corruption and tax compliance aspects of the problem[23]. IUU fishing is driven by foreign distant water fishing (DWF) fleets which have extended their operations ever further afield in the face of dwindling domestic catches in the past years, moving to global South waters and the high seas (seas beyond the territorial waters of any state) where there is less monitoring, surveillance and control. Five countries represent 90 percent of DWF activities in the world (China, Taiwan, Japan, Spain and South Korea)[24] and many of them would be unprofitable without being subsidised by their respective governments.[25]

The financial secrecy surrounding the owners of vessels is a key driver of IUU fishing as secrecy makes it harder to catch the real perpetrators of this illegal trade

The financial secrecy surrounding the owners of vessels is a key driver of IUU fishing as secrecy makes it harder to catch the ultimate perpetrators of this illegal trade that is, the people who ultimately control and own IUU vessels and benefit from this harmful practice. Beneficial Ownership Transparency also serves as a deterrent, as there is a greater likelihood of being exposed of wrongdoings. Despite the scale and impact of IUU fishing, complex ownership structures can be used to hide the identities of their real beneficial owners (BOs) – that is, "the natural person(s) who ultimately owns or controls a customer and/or the natural person on whose behalf a transaction is being conducted. It also includes those persons who exercise ultimate effective control over a legal person or arrangement.[26] This ultimate ownership or control can be achieved through a complex web of ownership and may not be a direct relationship, but a chain of multiple ownership structures adding up to effective ownership or control over the entity (fishing vessel, processing facility, etc) or arrangement. See Box: what's BO.

21 WWF. Océanos: Pesca ilegal. Web homepage. https://www.wwf.es/nuestro_trabajo/oceanos/pesca_sostenible/pesca_ilegal/#:~:text=Se%20estima%20que%20el%2015,USD%20para%20la%20econom%C3%ADa%20mundial.

22 US International Trade Commission. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing accounts for more than USD $2 billion of US seafood imports. (18 March 2021) *https://www.usitc.gov/press_room/news_release/2021/er0318ll1740.htm*

23 Doumbouya, A., Camara, O., Mamie, J., Intchama, J., Jarra, A., Ceesay, S, Gueye, A., Ndiaye, D., Beibou, E., Padilla, A., Belhabib, D. Assessing the effectiveness of monitoring control surveillance of illegal fishing: the case of West Africa. Frontiers in Marine Science (7 March 2017). *https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2017.00050*

24 Stimson Center, Shining a Light: The Need for Transparency Across Distant Water Fishing. (2019) *Stimson Distant Water Fishing Report.pdf*

25 Enric Sala, Juan Mayorga, Christopher Costello, David Kroodsma, Maria L.D. Palomares, Daniel Pauly, U. Rashid Sumaila, Dirk Zeller, "The Economics of Fishing the High Seas, Science Advances, 2018, 4 (2018), *https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aat2504*

26 FATF Guidance: Transparency and Beneficial Ownership. (October 2014). Financial Action Task Force. http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/ Guidance-transparency-beneficial-ownership.pdf. Archived at: *https://perma.cc/F5YV-9EHP*

Beneficial ownership information is "rarely, if ever, collected during the licensing or vessel registration process," with only information on the legal owner being collected**.**[27] Collecting information on the legal owners is completely inadequate, IUU operators often register vessels in jurisdictions such as Cayman Islands and Panama which do not require to provide beneficial ownership information when registering a fishing vessel, with only the legal owner information being required, and have lax controls over vessel operations. Hong Kong, Cayman Islands and Panama do have centralised BO registries, which offer some access to national authorities, and internationally via information requests, but is useless unless one knows the beneficial owners of the registered vessels.

Companies and owners of IUU fishing vessels often use complex, cross-jurisdictional corporate structures to mask the links to the beneficial owners (BOs) behind these operations

Companies and owners of IUU fishing vessels often use complex, cross-jurisdictional corporate structures to mask the links to the beneficial owners BO behind these operations, ranging from using shell companies to setting up joint ventures see Box: Complex Corporate Structures. These complex corporate structures also disguise a range of other violations such as illegal access to fishing quotas and vessel authorisations, document forgery, vessel identity fraud, human trafficking, forced labour and tax evasion, tax abuses see Box: IUU fishing and other crimes. Making matters worse, nothing prevents IUU owners from renaming and reflagging the vessels to different jurisdictions, allowing them to hide the vessels' identities, activities and compliance history from the authorities, further obfuscating the BO of these vessels.

As a result, enforcement efforts have generally focused on the vessel itself and its captain and crew who often work in poor conditions and receive very low salaries, as opposed to the beneficial owner(s) with often very small fines being applied, thereby offering no incentive for IUU vessel owners to stop operating illegally.[28] Some studies suggest that penalties would have to be increased by 24 times to have a real deterrent effect on illegal fishing activities, something which is not yet happening.[29] Another approach would be to target the companies and their beneficial owners with anti-corruption related sanctions including asset freezes.

Most of the IUU fishing literature so far has focused on law enforcement capabilities of nations which suffer most from illicit fishing instances, however, in this report, we focus mainly on the financial secrecy aspects of IUU fishing in both the countries where the offence takes place and in the countries that via their status as a flag of convenience or as a secrecy jurisdiction enable this trade to hide their real beneficial owners. We discuss how the consumer countries do not require open and public beneficial ownership registries to be established as part of supply chain transparency initiatives in their own territories, in flag states and secrecy jurisdictions on source countries.Some countries do not even have beneficial ownership registries that are accessible to law enforcement agencies.

27 Horn, P., Fiore, G. Better Tracking of Vessel Ownership Needed to Fight Illegal Fishing. Pew Charitable Trust (20 September 2020) *https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/09/20/better-tracking-of-vessel-ownership-needed-to-fight-illegal-fishing*

28 Copeland, D., Utermohlen, M., Brush, A. (10 December 2020). Spotlight on: The Exploitation of Company Structures by Illegal Fishing Operators. TMT. *https://www.tm-tracking.org/post/illegal-fishing-operators-exploit-company-structures-to-cover-up-illegal-operations*

29 Love, P."Pirate Fishing", in Fisheries: While Stocks Last? OECD Publishing. (2010) http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264079915-5-en

The African Union does classify IUU fishing as an Illicit Financial Flow (IFF) in its landmark report on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa saw fish and crustaceans accounted for USD $10 billion of Illicit Financial flows over 10 years from 2000-2010 in their trade mispricing analysis.[30] However, this did not consider undeclared fish catch, which is the main vehicle how IUU fishing operates, which is why estimates in this report are far higher for the African continent. It also cited an example of asset recovery efforts from Illicit fishing activities from the USA to South Africa worth USD $60 million in a single asset recovery case concerning the lobster trade.[31]

The High-Level Panel for the Sustainable Ocean Economy (The Ocean Panel) has identified ownership and financial secrecy as a key driver of IUU fishing, and it endorsed key transparency recommendations to put an end to this illicit activity. In its report on Africa's Blue Economy,[32] it found that ownership transparency is part of the solution towards ending IUU fishing in Africa, a view endorsed by the Kenyan government[33] as part of the panel who endorsed the proposal for vessel ownership transparency and fishing contract transparency to be available for the public in registries.

Encouragingly, the G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' Communiqué[34] released in May 2021 welcomed "discussions by Finance Ministers on strengthening beneficial ownership transparency to better tackle the illicit financial flows stemming from illegal wildlife trade [IWT] and other illicit threats to nature." Also, the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Illegal Wildlife Trade report highlighted that the widespread use of shell and front companies enabled the import and export of endangered wildlife products, as well as the laundering or co-mingling of associated products.[35] This dispelled the myth that the profits of wildlife trafficking are moved solely in cash, putting more emphasis on the need to uncover the UBO of companies linked to environmental crimes.

IUU fishing still seems to be largely missing from the debates around extractive industry transparency

However, IUU fishing still seems to be largely missing from the debates around extractive industry transparency, supply chain transparency or design of country based public beneficial ownership registries that would reveal the beneficial owners (BOs), despite the importance of this activity and its direct impact on the management of global fisheries resources, livelihoods, and the environment. For instance, for the extractive industries, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was launched in 2002 to facilitate the voluntary disclosure by governments and firms, requiring that the beneficial owners of extractive companies are disclosed.[36] In total, 55 countries have joined this body but this only covers oil, gas and mineral resources, not fisheries.

30 UNECA. Illicit Financial Flow: report of the high level panel on illicit financial flows from Africa. https://repository.uneca.org/bitstream/handle/10855/22695/b11524868.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

31 *https://baselgovernance.org/publications/GC1*

32 Widjaja, S., Long, T., Wirajuda, H. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and associate drivers. The Ocean Panel. (2020) *https://oceanpanel.org/publication/illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing-and-associated-drivers/*

33 The Africa Report. Enough is enough. African nations must unite against illegal fishing. (13 March 2020) *https://www.theafricareport.com/24619/enough-is-enough-african-nations-must-unite-against-illegal-fishing/*

34 G7 Climate and Environment: Ministers' Communiqué, London, 21 May 2021. *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communique/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-communique-london-21-may-2021*

35 FATF Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade (June 2020). *https://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/Money-laundering-and-illegal-wildlife-trade.pdf*

36 EITI Beneficial ownership: knowing who owns and controls extractive companies. *https://eiti.org/beneficial-ownership*

Beneficial ownership registries do exist to some extent in 80 countries worldwide[37], but most of them are not public. Even when they are public in principle, they lack universal access, may incur fees, are limited to residents of that specific country or do not follow open data standards and lack verification or indeed do not include fisheries as a high-risk sector where the threshold of reporting ownership and especially joint ventures should be lower than the standard threshold. Such lower thresholds are often applied in other high-risk sectors such as extractive industries, banking and finance, and regarding politically exposed persons (PEPs). Encouragingly some public beneficial ownership registries, such as the one in Ghana have no threshold for PEPs[38], and a lower threshold of 5 percent of ownership in extractive industries[39], but fishing is not identified as part of the extractive industry.

Beneficial Owner vs. Legal Owner

In this report we use the term 'legal owner' and the 'beneficial owner'. The legal owner is the company or legal entity that is named and identified as owning a vessel. Sometimes even a named individual shareholder might be a nominee shareholder, in which case such an individual is still the legal owner. Meanwhile the beneficial owner is a natural person – that is, a real, live human being, not another company or trust – who directly or indirectly exercises substantial control over a company or receives substantial economic benefits from the company. [40]

Meanwhile, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) define the beneficial owner as "natural person(s) who ultimately owns or controls a customer and/or the natural person on whose behalf a vessel is being operated. It also includes those persons who exercise ultimate effective control over a legal person or arrangement.[41]

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) has attempted to bridge this gap to increase transparency in the fisheries sector and ensure its sustainability. However, the FiTI standard asks countries to only report on their *status* of implementing public beneficial ownership registries, rather than requiring it as part of adopting the FiTI standard.[42] Seven countries have committed so far to implement or adhere to this scheme at the time of writing this report – Ecuador, Mauritania, Seychelles, Senegal, Cabo Verde, Madagascar, and São Tomé and Príncipe – even though some of these countries like Senegal as we will see later in this report have not done anything effectively to implement this standard since announcing their commitment to join FiTI.[43]

More recently, the European Union has emphasised its commitment to promote transparency in the fisheries sector to identify those responsible for IUU fishing, as part of its new

37 Tax Justice Network, Financial Secrecy Index 2022,

38 *https://www.openownership.org/en/blog/beneficial-ownership-reform-in-africa-analysing-progress-in-ghana-kenya-and-nigeria/*

39 https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2021/03/30/ghana-introduces-beneficial-ownership-regime-for-company-registration/

40 Global Witness, The Great Rip Off, 2014, https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/corruption-and-money-laundering/great-rip-off/)

41 FATF Guidance: Transparency and Beneficial Ownership. October 2014. Financial Action Task Force, p. 8 https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Fatfrecommendations/Transparency-and-beneficial-ownership.html

42 FiTI Standard. *https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard*

43 Desrochers, E. Ecuador becomes first Latin American country to join FiTI (21 March 2022) *https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/ecuador-becomes-first-latin-american-country-to-join-fiti*

agenda on international ocean governance.[44] The EU has required countries where fish is sold to the EU to be clearer on the origin of the fish exported to the EU, and ensuring that fisheries related laws and practices are in place. If these are not in place, they can receive yellow or red cards, that can lead to import restrictions, tariffs and import bans. The United States and Japan, which together with the EU account for 55 percent of the global seafood market,[45] have made similar commitments to promote transparency.

Meanwhile, the World Trade Organisation after two decades of complex negotiations, agreed to ban subsidies to companies involved in IUU fishing.[46] Making IUU fishing more sanctionable makes it ever more important to report on IUU fishing instances, and for countries to publish list of vessels caught doing IUU fishing. FATF or UNODC have not yet discussed any sanctions to individuals who are behind companies regularly involved in IUU Fishing. Asset recovery efforts from proceeds of IUU fishing should also be further developed.

the World Trade Organisation after two decades of complex negotiations, agreed to ban subsidies to companies involved in IUU fishing

Despite all these challenges, this report also sheds light on the beneficial owners interests behind industrial and semi-industrial vessels involved in IUU fishing globally though only a fifth of detected IUU vessels had some shareholder level data available, even after using the best available data sources and information available [see Annex 1: data and methodology].

In terms of registered owners, we found that approximately 40 percent of IUU vessels do identify a company behind the offence, though these could be shell companies. This is vastly important as often after a registered offence the vessel itself is sold, name and flag changed, or it may be scrapped. Also shell companies that directly own offending vessels can be closed or made inactive quite easily after an offence. Closing large fisheries companies is much harder as they have physical assets and large number of staff. Re-offending is easier when companies and individuals are not revealed behind the offending vessels as then they cannot be fined, barred from fishing licences or sanctioned. The data also shows that this is a highly concentrated sector, with a quarter of detected IUU vessels belonging to only 10 global companies, some of which have kept their beneficial owner information hidden despite their large-scale operations.

In this report, in Chapter 2 presents our key findings in terms of financial secrecy in the fishing industry. Chapter 3 analyses the cases of Argentina and Senegal, while Chapter 4 looks at the lack of effective financial transparency regulation in this industry which enables beneficial owners to avoid being brought to account for their activities. We end by presenting our conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5. Annex 1 explains the methodology and data sources used to produce this report, with relevant tables of offences related to the top 10 companies referenced in this study. Annex 2 lists the vessels, their registered owners, and beneficial owners where such information was available belonging to the top 10 companies involved in IUU Fishing.

44 European Commission. Questions and Answers on International Ocean Governance (24 June 2020) *https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_3744*

45 White House. Memorandum on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Unregulated Fishing and Associated Labour Abuses. (27 June 2022) https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/06/27/memorandum-on-combating-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing-and-associated-labor-abuses/

46 Tipping, A., Irschlinger, T. WTO Members Clinch a Deal on Fisheries Subsidies. IISD (17 June 2020) *https://sdg.iisd.org/news/wto-members-clinch-a-deal-on-fisheries-subsidies/*

What is IUU fishing?[47]

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing captures a wide variety of fishing activities.

Specifically, Illegal fishing refers to fishing activities:

- Fishing conducted by national or foreign vessels in waters under the jurisdiction of a State, without the permission of that State, or in contravention of its laws and regulations;
- Fishing conducted by vessels flying the flag of States that are parties to a relevant regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO) but operate in contravention of the conservation and management measures adopted by that RFMO and by which the States are bound, or relevant provisions of the applicable international law; or
- In violation of national laws or international obligations, including those undertaken by cooperating States to a relevant RFMO

Unreported fishing refers to fishing activities:

- which have not been reported, or have been misreported, to the relevant national authority, in contravention of national laws and regulations; or
- undertaken in the area of competence of a relevant RFMO which have not been reported or have been misreported, in contravention of the reporting procedures of that RFMO

Unregulated fishing refers to fishing activities:

- in the area of application of a relevant RFMO that are conducted by vessels without nationality, or by those flying the flag of a State not party to that organization, or by a fishing entity, in a manner that is not consistent with or contravenes the conservation and management measures of that RFMO; or
- in areas or for fish stocks in relation to which there are no applicable conservation or management measures and where such fishing activities are conducted in a manner inconsistent with State responsibilities for the conservation of living marine resources under international law.

IUU fishing and other crimes

Fishing vessels and operators involved in IUU fishing are sometimes linked to transnational crimes, in particular human trafficking and forced labour, as well as arms and drugs smuggling, due to the unobserved nature of fishing on the high seas taking place beyond national jurisdictions.[48] This is partly because IUU operators are more willing to drive down costs by exploiting workers through forced labour, since they are already evading laws and oversight.

Hiding the identity of the beneficial owners of vessels also enables participants to launder the proceeds of IUU fishing operations, by separating the individuals and companies from their illicit proceeds. The long value chains in the fisheries sector provide several opportunities for money laundering at different stages: during the purchase of expensive assets, such as fishing vessels or fishing gear, while selling products, and paying crew wages. The illegal proceeds gained by beneficial owners can therefore be laundered and presented as being derived from legitimate activities all while maintaining the secrecy of the beneficiary of those illicit financial gains.[49]

A C4ADS investigation looking at 29 IUU fishing networks, for instance, reported that 60 percent overlapped with human trafficking organised crime, tax evasion and customs fraud.[50] Several reports and media stories have graphically documented the intersection between IUU fishing and other crimes,[51] including publishing instances on how once placed on a vessel, men often work for little or no money, and are frequently beaten, starved and imprisoned in cages, many of them forced to stay at sea for months at a time, and even years.[52]

47 FAO Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing. *https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/what-is-iuu-fishing/en/*

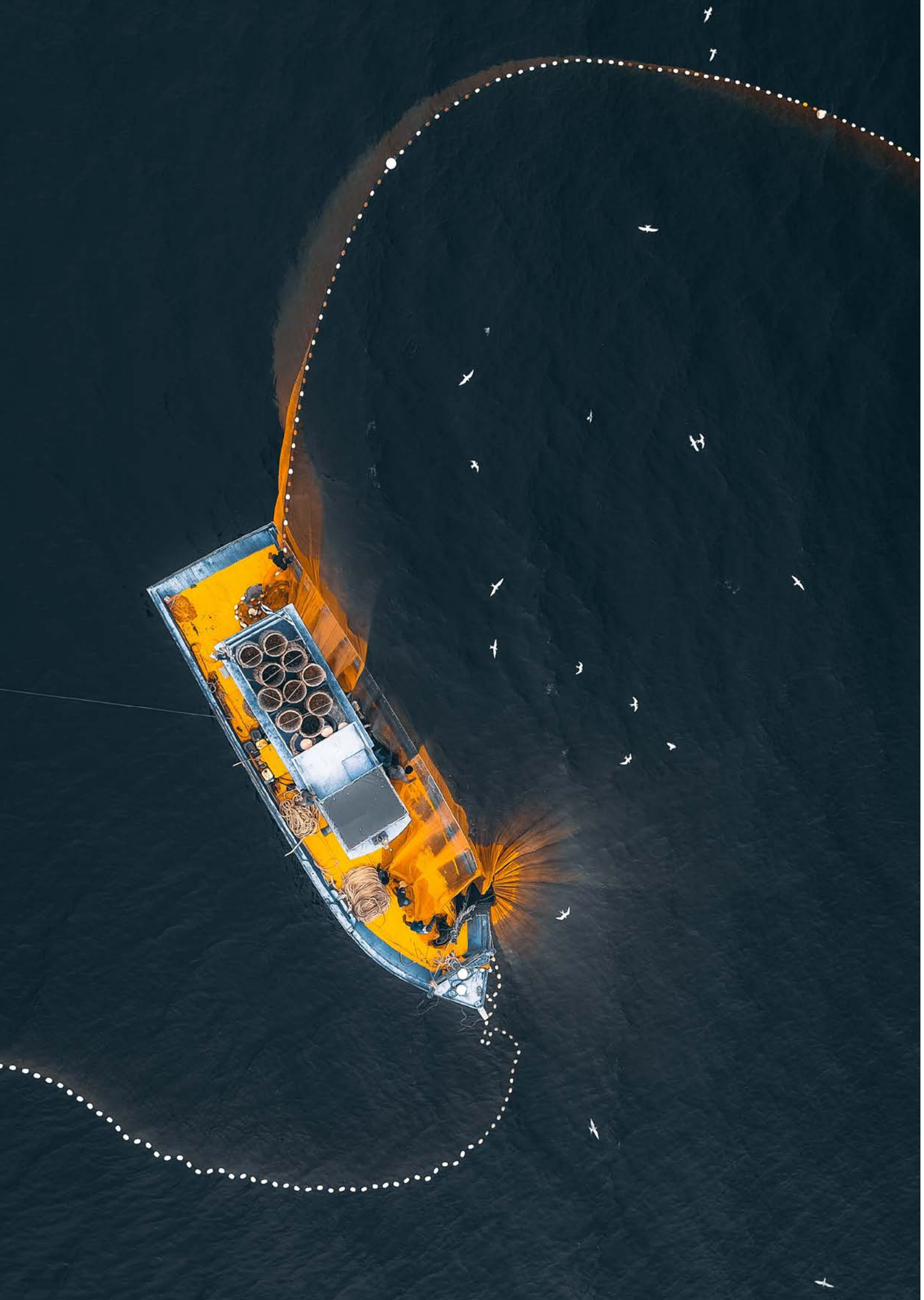
48 UNODC. Rotten fish: A guide on addressing corruption in the fisheries sector. (2019) *https://www.unodc.org/documents/Rotten_Fish.pdf*

49 Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). Fishing In The Dark: Transparency of beneficial ownership. tBrief Edition #3. (September 2020). *https://www.fisheriestransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/FiTI_tBrief03_BO_EN.pdf*

50 Brush., A. Strings Attached: Exploring the onshore networks behind illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. (2019) C4ADS. *https://static1.squarespace.com/static/566ef8b4d8af107232d5358a/t/5d7022301845f300016ee532/1567629912450/Strings+Attached.pdf*

51 FAO. Links between IUU fishing and crimes in the fisheries sector. *https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/links-crimes/en/*

52 Aylesworth, S. (27 June 2019) The Human Toll of Illegal Fishing. NRDC. *https://www.nrdc.org/experts/sandy-aylesworth/human-toll-illegal-fishing*



2. Main findings

This report, based on the most extensive analysis of individual cases of industrial and semi-industrial vessels involved in IUU fishing to date, has identified five key findings:

1. Individual shareholder information was available for only one-sixth of vessels accused of IUU fishing, mostly incomplete, revealing a beneficial ownership information gap.
2. Billions of dollars are lost in Illicit Financial Flows linked to IUU fishing every year – USD $11.49 billion for Africa alone which concentrates almost half of identified IUU vessels, with West Africa revealed as global epicentre of these activities.
3. A third of IUU vessels are flagged to China, whilst 8.76 percent carry flags of convenience, which have lax controls and low or non-existent taxes.
4. Top 10 companies own nearly one-quarter of total vessels involved in IUU fishing - eight from China, one from Latin America and another from Spain, some linked to tax havens.
5. Spanish tuna giant Albacora SA is Europe´s largest IUU fishing company.

2.1. Individual shareholders were found for only one-sixth of vessels accused of IUU fishing, with most of the data being incomplete, revealing the beneficial ownership gap in the fisheries sector

We found some individual and accurate shareholder information for only 162 vessels or 16.7 percent of vessels identified of being involved in IUU fishing – that is, the beneficial owner being the person(s) who exercise ultimate effective control over the entity (fishing vessel, processing

Some individual shareholder information for only 16.7 percent of vessels identified of being involved in IUU fishing

facility, etc.) or arrangement[53] . In very few cases where we found majority shareholder information, despite using the most robust databases available. This compares with 43.3 percent of cases (421 vessels out of 972 in total in the IUU dataset) for which we were able to find some legal ownership information for companies behind IUU vessels, even though these are often shell companies.

There is still a risk that these individually identified shareholders may be nominees, i.e. acting on behalf of others and thus not being the real beneficial owners.

This individual shareholder data has significant variations, as 111 cases relate to Asia, 26 relate to Latin America and the Caribbean 24 relate to Europe and only 1 relates to Africa

The availability of beneficial ownership (BO) information was collected for only 421 out of the 972 vessels and it varied by the nationality of the vessels. Specifically, we were able to find some company shareholder information for 50 percent of vessels whose legal owners were identified as being from Asia. This compares with 47 percent for Latin American vessels, 32 percent for European and only 3 percent for African vessels.

This suggests that Asian countries are somewhat more transparent in revealing legal ownership data, followed by Latin America and Europe, even though this data is limited and partial for most cases. The low figure for African vessels suggests that they are owned mainly by shell companies or joint ventures, a common feature for example for vessels operating in Ghana which have been found to hide mostly Chinese business interests to exploit the local waters, as explained earlier in this report.

Overall, the lack of beneficial ownership information is concerning, while even legal ownership data is largely missing. The S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, for example, does not provide adequate information about shareholders and beneficial owners, even though this is the largest repository of fishing vessel data in the world.

Similarly, official datasets such as the regional fisheries management organisations' Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List only provide legal ownership information – as opposed to beneficial owners – for just a few vessels, and only for current owners, not for those when the IUU offense took place.

One of the few official government IUU lists that we were able to access since most others are kept secret by governments, the one from Guinea, only included some ownership information for vessels caught engaged in this illegal practice in 2017. We also found that sometimes this already limited information only provided data for registered operators, not even legal owners, with no data provided for beneficial owners whatsoever.

On the other hand, the IUU notices published by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) proved to be a highly useful resource, reflecting the country's growing commitment to fisheries transparency. However, we were only able to find notices from 2018 to 2020, and only provided information about the companies behind the identified vessels, requiring further analysis to find their shareholders which we were only able to discover for some cases.

53 FATF Guidance: Transparency and Beneficial Ownership. (October 2014). Financial Action Task Force. http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/ Guidance-transparency-beneficial-ownership.pdf. Archived at: *https://perma.cc/F5YV-9EHP*

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

Complex corporate structures, hiding ownership

Setting up complex ownership structures is a common practice among many beneficial owners of vessels involved in IUU fishing to hide their identity. A preferred method is setting up multiple *shell companies* without significant assets, ongoing business activities or employees across multiple jurisdictions, and with often no presence beyond basic contact information. Names of owners or shareholders tied to the companies are often hidden, and only lawyers and accountants appear in the company documents, with no operational control over these companies.

These corporate structures are also used to disguise the role that states and powerful individuals play in IUU fishing. A report by C4ADS observed that state-owned enterprises or politically exposed persons (PEPs) entrusted with a prominent public function, were the beneficial owners or shareholders of companies engaged in IUU fishing in 20 percent of its investigations.[54]

Another corporate method to hide beneficial ownership is setting up *joint ventures* used to conceal the foreign ownership of fishing vessels particularly in developing countries. They are set up between national and international investors, whereby two or more companies create a new company to their mutual benefit, allowing them to operate fishing vessels under local flags. This could be justified in cases where coastal countries lack capital, infrastructure and markets to develop their own industrial fishing industries and require foreign funds and support.

However, the lack of transparency has allowed many fictitious joint ventures to be created, whereby local partners act only as "fronts" for foreign companies and investors, especially in places where nationally owned vessels receive priority access to fisheries resources.[55] These has often benefitted foreign companies, fuelling in some cases corruption among local officials.[56]

54 Brush, A. Strings Attached: exploring the onshore networks behind illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. C4DS (2019) *https://www.c4reports.org/strings-attached*

55 Environmental Justice Foundation 'Off the hook: how flags of convenience let illegal fishing go unpunished. *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF-report-FoC-flags-of-convenience-2020.pdf*

56 Financial Action Task Force Report 'Concealment of Beneficial Ownership'. (July 2018) https://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/FATF-Egmont-Concealment-beneficial-ownership.pdf

2.2. Billions of dollars are lost in Illicit Financial Flows linked to IUU fishing every year – up to USD $11.49 billion for Africa alone which concentrates almost half of identified IUU vessels, with West Africa revealed as the global epicentre of these activities with 40 percent of cases.

The report has identified 972 industrial and semi-industrial commercial fishing vessels as being involved in IUU fishing between January 2010 and May 2022. This is four times more than the number of vessels included in the Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List from the regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) individual lists of IUU vessels for that same period, combined historically by Trigg Mat Tracking.[57] The geographical location where vessels were involved in these offenses was identified for half of the cases, totalling 485 vessels.

The report has identified 972 industrial and semi-industrial commercial fishing vessels as being involved in IUU fishing between January 2010 and May 2022. This is four times more than the number of vessels included in the Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List from the regional fisheries management organisations

Of these, 48.9 percent or 237 vessels were found in Africa, followed by Asia (111 vessels, 22.9 percent of the total), Latin America (76, 15.7 percent) and Europe (14, 2.9 percent), while vessels were identified in other regions such as the United States and Oceania. In Latin America, the presence of alleged and reported IUU fishing vessels was concentrated in Peru (21), Argentina (18) and Colombia (11). In Asia, on the other hand, the majority of vessels were found to operate in Indonesia (54), Taiwan (24) and Timor Leste (15). (see table below)

Given that conservative estimate place the value of this illicit trade anywhere between USD $10 billion to USD $23.5 billion[58] every year, and given that Africa accounts for almost half of all detected cases, we conclude that the continent is incurring an economic loss from Illicit Financial Flows alone linked to IUU fishing of up to USD $11.49 billion every year.

LOCATION OFFENCES

Region	Total	percent total
Latin America	76	15.7 percent
Europe	14	2.9 percent
Africa	237	48.9 percent
Asia	111	22.9 percent

57 Combined IUU Vessel List. *https://iuu-vessels.org*

58 Agnew, D.J., Pearce, J., Pramod, G., Peatman, T., Watson, R., Beddington, J.R. and Pitcher, T.J. (2009) 'Estimating the worldwide extent of illegal fishing', PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. (February 2019) *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

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TOP 10 LOCATIONS OF DETECTED IUU VESSELS, January 2010-May 2022

Indonesia	54
Sierra Leone	37
Ghana	34
Guinea	32
Taiwan	23
Guinea Bissau	23
Somalia	22
Peru	21
Liberia	18
Argentina	18

The most affected sub-region is West Africa. In total, 195 vessels were reported to have been involved in IUU fishing in this region, representing 40.2 percent of the total for which there is offense location information. The Western African countries where more IUU vessels were detected were Sierra Leone (37), Ghana (34), Guinea (32), Guinea Bissau (23), Liberia (18), the Gambia (12) and Senegal (12), though this would appear to be the tip of the iceberg given the lack of regional monitoring and control capacity by local authorities.

With its coastline stretching from the Strait of Gibraltar to Cape Town in South Africa, this region has some of the most diverse and economically important fishery locations in the world. This includes the Canary Current and the Benguela. Today, western Africa's coastal fishery resources are operating well beyond the brink of sustainable utilisation, in part because of IUU fishing. More than 50 percent of the fisheries resources in the stretch of coast ranging from Senegal to Nigeria alone have already been overfished.[59]

It has been estimated that IUU fishing accounts for between one third and half of the total regional catch.[60] The depletion of regional fisheries stocks, partly driven by IUU fishing, has huge social consequences particularly for this region, made worse by the current global food security prompted by the Ukraine war and climate change. Up to one-quarter of jobs in West Africa are linked to fisheries, whilst up to two-thirds of all animal protein in coastal West African States come from fish and seafood., according to the UN.[61] In addition, fisheries resources across this region are also under mounting pressure by fishmeal companies which mainly process small pelagic fish, which is then turned into fishmeal for export mainly to China, which in some countries like the Gambia already represent around half of total official fisheries catches.[62]

59 FAO (2012) The state of the world fisheries and aquaculture. Rome: FAO. *https://www.fao.org/3/i2727e/i2727e.pdf*

60 Africa Progress Panel (2014) Grain, fish, money: financing Africa's green and blue revolutions. Africa Progress Report 2014. *https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Africa_Progress_Report_2014.PDF*

61 FAO (2020) The state of the world fisheries and aquaculture. Rome: FAO. *https://www.fao.org/3/ca9229en/ca9229en.pdf*

62 Changing Markets. Fishing for Catastrophe: how global aquaculture supply chains are leading to the destruction of wild fish socks and depriving people of food in India, Vietnam and The Gambia. (October 2019) *https://changingmarkets.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CM-WEB-FINAL-FISHING-FOR-CATASTROPHE-2019.pdf*

Illicit Financial Flows losses

In this report we focus on IUU fishing, which accounts for as much as one fifth of the global fisheries catch, estimated to account for USD $10 billion to USD $23.5 billion[63] every year, making this the third most lucrative natural resource crime after timber and mining.[64] IUU fishing is leading to an economic loss of Illicit Financial Flows of up to USD $11.49 billion for Africa alone, given that 48.9 percent of detected IUU vessels are active in that continent according to this study.

The most affected sub-region is West Africa, where 40.2 percent of the detected global IUU fishing took place representing a loss of up to USD $9.4 billion in Illicit Financial Flows. This compares with other studies that found that IUU fishing represents 37 percent of total seafood catches in West Africa, already suggesting that this practice is widespread, putting at risk millions of people's livelihoods and the food security of the whole region.[65] This adds to a recent estimate which concludes that countries globally also lose between USD $2 billion and USD $4 billion every year in lost tax revenues alone as a result of this activity.[66]

The most affected sub-region is West Africa, where 40.2 percent of the detected global IUU fishing took place representing a loss of up to USD $9.4 billion in Illicit Financial Flows

2.3. One-third of IUU vessels were flagged to China, with many others using flags of convenience

Of the 972 identified vessels suspected or reported to be involved in IUU fishing, flag information was available for 696 of them, representing 72 percent of the total. More than a third of detected IUU vessels were flagged to China (233), followed by Ghana (32), South Korea (32), Italy (30), Taiwan (27) and Indonesia (23). (see table below)

In terms of regions, 54.7 percent of detected IUU vessels were flagged to Asian countries, driven mainly by China and South Korea, whilst 16.1 percent were flagged to Latin American countries, 13.5 percent to Africa and 12.8 percent to Europe.

In addition, 61 vessels (representing 8.76 percent of the total for which there is flag information) were registered in countries considered to be providing flags of convenience (FOCs), including Panama, Liberia, Comoros and Vanuatu. Flags of convenience have legitimate uses, but are also routinely used by ship owners to evade regulations of their home state, such as for safety and environmental standards and/or workers' rights.

8.76 percent of the total for which there is flag information) were registered in countries considered to be providing flags of convenience (FOCs), including Panama, Liberia, Comoros and Vanuatu

63 Agnew, D.J., Pearce, J., Pramod, G., Peatman, T., Watson, R., Beddington, J.R. and Pitcher, T.J. (2009) 'Estimating the worldwide extent of illegal fishing', PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. (February 2019) *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

64 Reid, A., Dury-Agri, J.R., Brush, A., Copeland, D. (4 June 2021) 'The Role of Beneficial Ownership in Combating IUU Fishing'. RUSI. *https://shoc.rusi.org/blog/the-role-of-beneficial-ownership-in-combating-iuu-fishing/*

65 Agnew, D.J., Pearce, J., Pramod, G., Peatman, T., Watson, R., Beddington, J.R. and Pitcher, T.J. (2009) 'Estimating the worldwide extent of illegal fishing', PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. (February 2019) *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

66 Sumaila, U.R., Zeller, D., Hood, L., Palomares, M.L.D, Li, Y., Pauly, D. Illicit trade in marine fish catch and its effects on ecosystems and people worldwide. Sciences Advances. (26 February 2020) *https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aaz3801*

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Flags of convenience can also help to hide vessel owners from legal action or scrutiny, particularly by obscuring who actually owns vessels engaging in illicit activity.[67] Several of these flag-of-convenience nations – particularly Panama, Cayman Islands, and Liberia and St Vincent – are also recognised as having low effective tax rates. see Box: Flags of Convenience: avoiding detection and taxes

Flags of convenience: avoiding detection and taxes

Flags of Convenience (FOCs) allow beneficial owners of vessels involved in IUU fishing to hide their identities and evade prosecution. Fishing vessels operating abroad are mandated under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets the current international maritime legal framework, to be registered to a specific country, called its Flag State.

This is a legal method whereby the international maritime community in essence delegates responsibility over the conduct of fishing vessels. Flag States are granted exclusive jurisdiction over vessels flying their flag and are responsible for ensuring that vessels comply with international rules and standards including working conditions and fisheries management, and should enforce rules where necessary.

However, some flag states are unable or unwilling to prescribe and enforce laws necessary to ensure, for instance, that owners of their fleet uphold minimum labour and safety standards, or operate sustainably. When ship owners target these flag states for ship registration, the flag state is referred to as a "flag of convenience".[68] In terms of beneficial ownership transparency, quite a few countries lack adequate transparency, and thus act as Flags of Convenience with respect to ownership transparency, even states not often referred to as FOC states.

Countries operating FOCs tend to operate "open registries" which are open to all ship owners, not only those residing within their jurisdiction, thereby allowing foreign individuals or companies to register a vessel and use a flag of a country where they do not reside or are based. UNCLOS states that there must be a "genuine link" between vessel owners and the flag state, but this requirement has been very vague and efforts to define the phrase have been unsuccessful or minimal.[69]

Countries offering FOCs often require less information for registration, including not having to disclose vessels' historical data and their beneficial ownership. They also generally fail to monitor vessels carrying their flag due to lack of enforcement capacity, have limited resources and are unwilling to fulfil their obligations. FOCs are often associated with poor labour laws, lax environmental regulations, weak beneficial ownership requirements and lower tax rates.[70]

67 Brush, A. (2019) 'Something smells fishy...'. Blog. *https://c4ads.org/commentary/2019-4-2-something-smells-fishy/*

68 The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITWF) has developed a list of 35 flag states it regards as FOCs (see https://www.itfglobal.org/en/sector/seafarers/flags-of-convenience). This list is not conclusive, and FAO has, for instance, added a number of flag states to the ITF list (see https://www.fao.org/3/y3824e/y3824e.pdf).

69 Baur, M. Flags of Convenience and the Hazards of Shipbreaking. Global Financial Integrity GFI (17 November 2021) *https://gfintegrity.org/flags-of-convenience-and-the-hazards-of-shipbreaking/*

70 Environmental Justice Foundation 'Off the hook: how flags of convenience let illegal fishing go unpunished. (2020) *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF-report-FoC-flags-of-convenience-2020.pdf*

> A report by the North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group noted that, in the past, FOCs even openly advertised that they allowed anonymous ownership of ship owning companies and have recently become more circumspect and use advertisements for anonymity couched in more general terms.[71]
>
> Also, vessels sighted at sea engaged in IUU activities can quickly change their name and registration – a practice known as flag-hopping – to avoid being identified in a port, making it extremely difficult to track down the actual owners.

Overall, some 15 percent of the world's large-scale fishing fleet is flying FOCs or listed as flag unknown.[72] The largest ownership and management of FOC vessels is the European Union, of which Spanish vessels account for half, followed by Taiwan, Honduras and Panama.[73] Data from this report therefore suggests that IUU vessels use FOCs in a similar proportion than the rest of the fishing fleets.

This contrasts with the North Atlantic Fisheries Intelligence Group research which concludes that 82.2 percent of vessels used for illegal fishing activities with a known flag state in the IUU list kept by RFMOs or Interpol Purple Notices were registered to a country recognised as a FOC, and C4DS observing in a separate report that 30 percent of the IUU networks it investigated used FOCs, though their dataset of vessels was more limited.[74]

Importantly, even though some countries are not regarded as flags of convenience, their regulations remain extremely lax, meaning that in practice they may have the same lack of controls. This is particularly the case of China whose regulations of its distant water fishing fleet are less vigorous than the regulation of its own domestic fisheries.[75]

As a flag state, China has a weak record of engaging with the international community and complying with RFMO obligations.[76] China has also failed to endorse some fundamental marine conventions, such as the Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage of 1992 (International Chamber of Shipping, 2019), the Forced Labour Convention (1930) and the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (1948) (ILO, 2017).

As of May 2022, China had also still not ratified the legally binding Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA), unlike other significant fisheries powers such as the EU and the United States.[77] This agreement was approved by the FAO Conference in 2009 and came into force in 2016, aiming to strengthen controls in ports where the fisheries catches are landed and reported, denying access to vessels suspected of IUU activity.

71 Nordic Council of Ministers. 'Chasing Red Herrings: Flags of Convenience, Secrecy and the Impact on Fisheries Crime Law Enforcement' (2017) *https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1253427/FULLTEXT01.pdf*

72 Gianni, M. and Simpson, W. (2005) 'The Changing Nature of High Seas Fishing'. Canberra: Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, International Transport Workers' Federation, and WWF International. *http://awsassets.wwf.es/downloads/pesca_altamar.pdf*

73 Couper, A, Smith, H., Ciceri, B (2015) Fishers and Plunderers: theft, slavery and violence at sea, p.102, Pluto Press. *https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745335919/fishers-and-plunderers/*

74 Brush, A. Strings Attached: exploring the onshore networks behind illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. C4DS (2019) *https://www.c4reports.org/strings-attached*

75 Mallory, T.G. (2013) China's distant water fishing industry: evolving policies and implications. Marine Policy 38: 99–108 *https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/marpol/v38y2013icp99-108.html*

76 Hosch, G. Report: China ranks worst on global illegal fishing index. China Dialogue. (2 May 2019) *https://maritime-executive.com/editorials/report-china-ranks-worst-on-global-illegal-fishing-index*

77 FAO. Parties to the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA). *www.fao.org/port-state-measures/background/parties-psma/en/*

On the other hand, China is one of the very few countries to have openly published notices on IUU fishing infringements involving Chinese vessels, providing data on their names, nature of the offenses, ownership and sometimes location of where the offenses took place. These notices are published by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and are an important step towards transparency, but the report authors were only to find notices from 2018 to 2020.

The fact that Ghana appears as the second largest flag for vessels identified as being engaged in IUU fishing activities is also problematic. In this West African country, over two million people depend directly or indirectly on marine fisheries for income and employment.[78] However, the country's rich fishing grounds have come under increasing pressure from industrial fishing, particularly from distant water fishing vessels from China, Spain and elsewhere. This in turn has directly impacted incomes of local artisanal fishers which have fallen by around 40 percent in the past two decades, reflecting greater competition with industrial vessels for increasingly scarce resources.[79]

In an attempt to limit the over-exploitation of its fisheries resources, Ghana's laws restrict industrial and semi-industrial fishing to Ghanaian-flagged vessels that are not owned or part-owned by foreign interests, except in the case of tuna trawling.[80] However, a 2018 report by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) alleged that 90 percent of trawlers registered in Ghana are Chinese owned and crewed, allowing these companies to avoid regulations.[81]

By registering Ghanaian subsidiaries and setting up local joint-venture companies, these businesses are able to import their vessels and secure licences, offering local agents or 'enablers' a cut of the overall proceeds. However, the vessels remain 'almost exclusively' operated by foreign firms. For example, the EFJ report found that one Chinese company alone, Rongcheng Marine Fishery Co. Ltd., operated 15 Ghanaian-flagged trawlers, some of whose licence holders and joint ventures have gained authorisations to export fisheries products to the EU.[82] This trend, in turn, would explain the high number of Ghanaian flagged vessels we have detected engaged in IUU fishing which, in reality, hide foreign interests through the use of shell companies.

This is like what happened in Namibia which publicly welcomed joint venture agreements to encourage foreign investment in the fisheries sector, but majority shares had to be owned by Namibian interests or nationals to apply for and access national catch quotas. In 2019, the "Fishrot Files", a collection of thousands of documents and emails from Iceland's fisheries giant Samherji, revealed serious alleged corruption by senior Namibian officials involving this scheme. [83]

The leaked documents showed that although Samherji appeared to maintain a minority ownership in its Namibian subsidiary Katla, it had majority control, allowing the Icelandic company

78 FAO. Ghana country profile fact sheets' in Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles. Rome: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (2018) *www.fao.org/fishery/facp/GHA/en*

79 Republic of Ghana. Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector Development Plan (2011–2016) *http://rhody.crc.uri.edu/gfa/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2018/04/Ghana-Fisheries-and-AquacultureSector-Development-Plan-2011-2016.pdf*

80 Republic of Ghana (2002) Fisheries Act. Available to the authors.

81 EJF. Ghana losing millions of dollars as Chinese fishing trawlers hide ownership. (24 May 2021) *https://ejfoundation.org/news-media/ghana-losing-millions-of-dollars-in-revenue-as-chinese-fishing-trawlers-hide*

82 Environmental Justice Foundation. China's hidden fleet in West Africa. (2018) *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/China-hidden-fleet-West-Africa-final.pdf*

83 Kleinfeld, J. Anatomy of a Bride: A deep dive into an underworld of corruption. Al Jazeera. (1 December 2019) *https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2019/12/1/anatomy-of-a-bribe-a-deep-dive-into-an-underworld-of-corruption*

to control Katla's profits and operations. They also showed that Samherji had paid bribes to Namibian politicians and high-ranking officials to enable this operation, prompting the country's fisheries and justice ministers to resign.[84]

IUU VESSELS BY FLAGS

Region	Total	Percent total
Latin America	112	16.1 percent
Europe	89	12.8 percent
Africa	94	13.5 percent
Asia	381	54.7 percent

TOP 10 IUU FLAG COUNTRIES

Country	Total vessels	Percent total for which flag data available
China	233	33 percent
Ghana	32	5 percent
South Korea	32	5 percent
Italy	30	4 percent
Taiwan	27	4 percent
Indonesia	23	3 percent
Ecuador	21	3 percent
Thailand	21	3 percent
Vietnam	20	3 percent
Peru	19	3 percent

2.4. Top 10 companies own nearly one-quarter of total vessels involved in IUU fishing

The report analysis reveals that the 10 top companies own 23.7 percent of the vessels reported to have been involved in IUU fishing for which beneficial ownership information is available. We gathered legal ownership and beneficial information for vessels at the time

84 WikiLeaks 'Fishrot Files' (2019) *https://wikileaks.org/fishrot/*

of the reported IUU offenses using mainly the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit and Moody's Orbis databases, as well as information taken from government agencies when IUU vessel legal or beneficial owners were explicitly mentioned (mainly in the case of Chinese vessels). [See Annex 1: Methodology]

Of the top 10 companies, eight are from China, one from Colombia and another from Spain. This reflects the fact that China's distant water fleet (DWF) is by far the largest in the world, with at least 3,000 vessels and believed to represent 36 percent of the world's DWF capacity.[85] Its activity is concentrated in Africa, Latin America and Asia where national authorities have limited monitoring and control capacity, and the local populations tend to depend on fishing for their protein intake and livelihoods.[86] We contacted all these companies for comment and to understand whether they have implemented any measures to ensure the sustainability of their fleets in the future, but have not received any replies.

TOP 10 COMPANIES BY NUMBER OF IUU VESSELS

Company	Total	Nationality
Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd	17	China
China National Overseas Fisheries Corporation Ltd. (CNFC)	16	China
Dalian Ruitaifeng Pelagic Fishery Co Ltd (*)	13	China
Qingdao Rongchang Ocean Fishery Co., Ltd. (subsidiary of Seacon Shipping Group Ltd)	10	China
Pescatun de Colombia SA	10	Colombia
Fuzhou Dongxinlong Ocean Fishing Co., Ltd.	8	China
Rongcheng Rongyuan Fishery Co Ltd	7	China
Dalian Bo Yuan Ocean Fishing Co Ltd	7	China
Fujian Zhengguan Fishery Development Co Ltd	6	China
Albacora SA	6	Spain
TOTAL	100	

(*) In 2019, Dalian Lianrun changed its name to Dalian Ruitaifeng Pelagic Fishery Co. Ltd (https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF_At-What-Cost_-2021_final.pdf)

The Chinese company Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd. tops the ranking (see table above). It was incorporated in the Cayman Islands in January 2010 with the original name China Equity Growth Investment Ltd. The company is also listed in the Nasdaq and, according to its annual report, is one of the largest US-listed marine services operating companies in China, based in Fuzhou.[87]

85 Stimson Center, Shining a Light: The Need for Transparency Across Distant Water Fishing. (2019) *Stimson Distant Water Fishing Report.pdf*

86 Gutierrez, M., Daniels, A., Jobbins, G., Almanzor, G., Montenegro, C. Overseas Development Institute. China's distant-water fishing fleet, scale, impact and governance. (June 2020) https://cdn.odi.org/media/documents/ chinesedistantwaterfishing_web.pdf

87 Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd. Annual Report. *https://ir.ptmarine.com/annual-reports#document-26106-0001213900-21-053503*

Importantly, the Cayman Islands is regarded as a tax haven, given that there is no corporate income, capital gains, payroll or other direct taxes imposed on corporations in the country.[88] The Cayman Islands also ranks second in Tax Justice Network's Corporate Tax Haven Index,[89] and 14th in the 2022 Financial Secrecy Index.[90]

The Chinese company Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd. tops the ranking. It was incorporated in the Cayman Islands in January 2010 with the original name China Equity Growth Investment Ltd. The company is also listed in the Nasdaq

Some of this company's vessels operate under a subsidiary company called Fujian Provincial Pingtan County Ocean Fishery Group Co. Ltd., 92 percent of which is owned by Fujian Heyue Marine Fishing Development Co. Ltd. and 8 percent by the China Agriculture Industry Development Fund Co. Ltd., or China Agriculture, after investing USD $65 million in 2015.[91] China Agriculture was established in 2013 and is one of China's largest state-run agricultural industry funds and invests in enterprises in the agriculture sector, highlighting again the links between major Chinese fisheries companies and the government.

Pingtan Marine Enterprise's majority shareholder owning 56.2 percent of the shares at the time of most of the IUU reported offenses is the company's current Chairman and CEO, Xinrong Zhuo, according to Moody's Orbis database. He now controls shares in the company either directly (1.75 percent) or through two wholly owned companies, Mars Harvest which owns 32.67 percent of Pingtan shares and Heroic Treasure Limited with 18.36 percent of Pingtan shares. Interestingly, a C4ADS report found that Mr Zhuo is linked to another Chinese firm called Honglong Ocean Fishing, having founded this company in 1995 and serving as its supervising officer until September 2006.[92]

This same report also mentions that his wife, Lin Ping, currently serves as the supervisor to Honglong Ocean Fishing while the majority shareholder is a Chinese investment company controlled by Zhuo Longjie, the brother of Zhuo Xinrong and a serving director of Pingtan Marine Enterprise. In addition, according to SEC filings submitted by Pingtan Marine Enterprise, Fujian Provincial Pingtan County Ocean Fishing sub-contracts a fleet of 20 fishing vessels from Fuzhou Honglong Ocean Fishing Co. Ltd. under a 25-year exclusive operating license.

Both companies appear to be operating closely. The environmental group Sea Shepherd for instance recorded video footage in February 2017 showing suspected illegal transhipment of around 43 tonnes of sharks in Timor Leste between the company's fleet of 15 vessels Fu Yuan Yu 9607-9621[93] to the mothership Fu Yuan Leng 999[94] which is owned by Honglong

88 PWC Tax Summaries. *https://taxsummaries.pwc.com/cayman-islands/corporate/taxes-on-corporate-income*

89 Tax Justice Network. Corporate Tax Haven Index 2021. https://cthi.taxjustice.net/en/

90 Tax Justice Networks. Cayman Islands profile. *https://taxjustice.net/country-profiles/cayman-islands/*

91 Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd. Annual Report. *https://ir.ptmarine.com/annual-reports#document-26106-0001213900-21-053503*

92 Brush, A. Strings Attached: exploring the onshore networks behind illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. C4DS (2019) *https://www.c4reports.org/strings-attached*

93 Pingtan Marine Enterprise. Webpage. *https://www.ptmarine.com/fishing-operations/our-vessels*

94 Sea Sheperd. Sea Shepherd responds to East Timor official who supports shark annihilation. (21 September 2017). *https://www.seashepherd.ch/fr-ch/news-et-evenements/sea-shepherd-response-east-timor-2/*

Ocean Fishing and appears in one of China's official IUU notices.[95] Three other vessels are also identified in this report as having been allegedly involved in IUU fishing belonging to Honglong. These reported illegal activities prompted the Indonesian Fisheries Minister, Ms Susi Pudjianstuti, to ban both companies from fishing in Indonesian waters in 2014.

Honglong has also been linked to an Indonesian fishing company called PT Dwikarya Reksa Abadi, whose license was reported by Indonesian and Australian media to have been revoked by Indonesia in 2014 for committing criminal offenses.[96] According to C4ADS, the Indonesian corporate registry reveals that the majority shareholder of this company was Honglong Ocean Fishing as of May 2017. Additionally, Pingtan Marine's Annual Report from 2016 claims that PT Dwikarya Reksa Abadi acted as an "agent to apply and renew Indonesian fishing licenses" for Pingtan Marine and its subsidiaries.[97] (see Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd. tree)

The second company in the top 10 ranking is the **China National Overseas Fisheries Corporation Ltd. (CNFC)** with 16 of its vessels identified as being involved in alleged and reported IUU fishing activity. The CNFC was China's original state-owned distant water fishing fleet, starting operations in 1985 with five vessels. By 1999, private vessels made up around 70 percent of the fleet, and CNFC owned 556 vessels.[98] With its subsidiaries, CNFC remains a publicly listed state company and is China's largest fishing company, with offices in Spain, Morocco, Guinea-Bissau, India, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and Australia.[99]

State-owned China National Overseas Fisheries Corporation Ltd. (CNFC) appears second in the IUU list

The third company in the ranking is China´s **Dalian Ruitaifeng Pelagic Fishery**, formerly called Dalian Lianrun until 2019. This company has 30 trawler vessels which fish mostly in West Africa in countries such as Ghana and Guinea. Between 2015-2019, the company's Lian Run fleet had several accounts of IUU fishing activities including using illegal gear and mesh sizes and shark finning, as well gross tonnage and identity fraud.[100]

In February 2018, the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) suspended Dalian Lianrun's fishing certificate following repeated illegal fishing infringements in West Africa. However, the company's vessels, Lian Run 43 and 44, continued to operate under the Ghanaian flag, receiving licences to fish in Ghana from 1 January to 30 June 2018, according to a report from EJF.

In 2019, the owners of Lian Run 43 reportedly reflagged the vessel to China and relocated the vessel to Guinea without alerting the Ghana Maritime Authority and Fisheries Commission to delete the vessel from the fleet register. Lian Run 44 continued to appear on the

95 China Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs – MARA.(20 March 2018). *http://www.moa.gov.cn/nybgb/2018/201803/201805/t20180528_6143244.htm*

96 Jong, Nicholas. Govt revokes licenses of six major fishing firms. The Jakarta Post (23 June 2015). *https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/06/23/govt-revokes-licenses-six-major-fishing-firms.html*

97 Brush, A. Strings Attached: exploring the onshore networks behind illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. C4DS (2019) *https://www.c4reports.org/strings-attached*

98 Mallory, T.G. China's distant water fishing industry: evolving policies and implications. Marine Policy 38: 99–108 (2013) *https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/marpol/v38y2013icp99-108.html*

99 FIS – Fish Information & Services. CNFC. *https://seafood.media/fis/companies/details.asp?l=e&company_id=32635*

100 EJF. The Ever-Widening Net: Mapping the scale, nature and corporate structures of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by the Chinese distant-water fleet. (2022) *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/The-Ever-Widening-Net-2022-final.pdf*

SPOUSE

PING LIN

SUPERVISOR

15% SHARES

TIQI GAO

10% SHARES

MR CHENG CHEN

From Indonesia

PT Dwikarya Reksa Abadi

* Fishing license revoked by Indonesia govt in 2014

Majority shareholder

94% shareholder

75% shareholder

ZHUO LONGJIE

FUJIAN YIHAI INVESTMENT CO. LTD.

FUZHOU HONGLONG OCEAN FISHING CO. LTD.

Sub-contracts vessels from

OWNS VESSELS REPORTED IUU FISHING

- Fu Yuan Yu 558
- Fu Yuan Yu 7865
- Fu Yuan Yu 7866
- Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999

DIRECTOR

BROTHER

18.36% SHARES

HEROIC TREASURE LTD

92% SHARES

FUJIAN HEYUE MARINE FISHING DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD

FUJIAN PROVINCIAL PINGTAN COUNTY OCEAN FISHING GROUP CO. LTD.

OWNS VESSELS REPORTED IUU FISHING

- Fu Yuan Yu 7861
- Fu Yuan Yu 7862

100% OWNER

Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd.

(incorporated in Cayman Islands)

ZHUO XINRONG

MARS HARVEST

32.67% SHARES

FATHER

DIRECTOR

ZHUO HONGHONG

8% SHARES

CHINA AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT FUND CO. LTD.

OWNS VESSELS REPORTED IUU FISHING

- Fu Yuan Yu 9607
- Fu Yuan Yu 9608
- Fu Yuan Yu 9609
- Fu Yuan Yu 9610
- Fu Yuan Yu 9611
- Fu Yuan Yu 9612
- Fu Yuan Yu 9613
- Fu Yuan Yu 9614
- Fu Yuan Yu 9615
- Fu Yuan Yu 9616
- Fu Yuan Yu 9617
- Fu Yuan Yu 9618
- Fu Yuan Yu 9619
- Fu Yuan Yu 9620
- Fu Yuan Yu 9621

Ghanaian licence list in June 2020 despite also appearing on Guinea's licence list as the China-flagged vessel Rui Tai Feng 906.[101]

Latin American IUU companies

The largest non-Chinese company in the top 10 ranking accused of being involved in IUU fishing is **Pescatun de Colombia SA.** This company ranks fifth in the list with 10 vessels reported to have been involved in IUU fishing. Pescatun was incorporated in 1993 but there is no beneficial ownership data for this company in the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, highlighting the lack of information on fishing companies including those accused of being involved in IUU fishing. This is despite Pescatun being a high-profile firm, owning several vessels and accused by the US government to be involved in IUU fishing on the high seas.

The largest non-Chinese company in the top 10 ranking accused of being involved in IUU fishing is Pescatun de Colombia SA but there is no beneficial ownership data available

In January 2011 seven of its vessels allegedly discarded 22.4 tonnes of tuna in violation of *Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission* measures: *American Eagle, Grenadier, Amanda S, Nazca, Cabo de Hornos, Sandra C,* and *Sea Gem.*[102] In addition, two other company vessels, the Dominador I and Marta Lucia R, allegedly fished in the Eastern Pacific Ocean without being on the Regional Vessel Register, prompting Colombia to not renew their fishing licenses and confining the vessels to port.

Later, three Pescatun vessels, Denominador I, Sea Gem and Cabo de Hornos, were reported to have been fishing illegally in the Yurupari-Malpelo marine protected area in Colombia between 2017 and 2019. This last vessel had previously been reported to have been sanctioned in 2012 and 2016 for shark finning.[103]

Fishing & Cargo Services SA is another Latin American company accused of being involved in IUU fishing. Even though it does not feature in the top 10 global ranking, we have found that the reason is that its shareholders have divided their shareholding interests between this company and another enterprise which together have six vessels accused of IUU fishing, meaning that it would be in the top ranking.

Three reefers belonging to Fishing & Cargo Services - Saly Reefer, Gabu Reefer, Silver Ice - were accused of being involved in IUU fishing. More specifically, in 2014 the Gabu Reefer and Silver Ice were investigated and fined by Liberia for landing fish without the necessary authorisations. In 2015, the Silver Ice was identified as a high-risk vessel by the FCWC West Africa Task Force (WATF) after Comoros raised concerns about the vessel operating outside the Western Indian Ocean, against the terms of Comoros fisheries regulations.[104]

101 EJF. At What Cost? How Ghana is losing out in fishing arrangements with China's distant water fleet. (2021) *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF_At-What-Cost_-2021_final.pdf*

102 NOAA. Improving International Fisheries Management, report to Congress. (January 2013) *https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/2013_biennial_report_to_congress__jan_11__2013__final_508.pdf*

103 Infobae. Pesca ilegal, intereses políticos y ausencia estatal: los peligros en el Refugio de tiburones de Turupari (11 October 2020) *https://www.infobae.com/america/colombia/2020/10/11/pesca-ilegal-intereses-politicos-y-ausencia-estatal-los-peligros-en-el-refugio-de-tiburones-de-yurupari/*

104 C4ADS. The exploitation of company structures y illegal fishing operators. (10 December 2020) *https://static1.squarespace.com/static/566ef8b4d8af107232d5358a/t/5fd21567ce71ee580fb1cb72/1607603565040/TMT-C4ADS_Spotlight+on+Transparency.pdf*

In March 2017, the environment organisation Greenpeace and three fisheries inspectors found the Saly Reefer carrying out illegal transhipments at sea in Guinea-Bissau waters, transferring fish from the vessels Flipper 3, Flipper 4, and Flipper 5 which turned off their AIS signal during the transhipment to avoid being detected by the authorities.[105] Transhipments at sea have long been recognised by the international community as a way to launder illegally-caught fish and were prohibited by Guinea Bissau since 2015.[106]

According to Moody's Orbis database, Fishing & Cargo Services was incorporated in August 2002 and has two shareholders: Mr Ismael Enrique Gerli Champsaur Jr. who has Panamanian and British nationality, and Mrs Doris Rivas. Interestingly, Mr Chamsaur Jr. and Mrs Rivas are also the shareholders of a separate company called **Silver Seas Resorts SL** which is also incorporated in Panama and is the owner of the Flipper 3 and Flipper 4 vessels accused of doing illegal transhipments with Saly Reefer, and were the main shareholders of **Daspescas Group SA** from Panama which in turn owned the Flipper 5 vessel, also accused of being involved in IUU fishing.

Mr Champsaur's Linkedin page included in the Moody's Orbis company page mentions that he is also the founder of Gerli & Co., a company that provides offshore company formation and registration in the Panamanian ship registry, among other services. This suggests that this company may have facilitated the incorporation of Fishing & Cargo Services and provided nominee directors, suggesting this may be a shell company set up to hide the beneficial owners.

Mr Champsaur also has 1,000 current roles in 428 companies and his name appears in the ICIJ Offshore Leaks database.[107] This database contains information on more than 810,000 offshore entities that are part of the Pandora Papers, Paradise Papers, Bahamas Leaks, Panama Papers and Offshore Leaks investigations, suggesting he is a nominee director and that Fishing & Cargo Services is a shell company.

Panama is regularly used by foreign owners wishing to avoid the stricter marine regulations imposed by their own countries, which helps explain that almost a quarter of the world's fleet carry a Panamanian flag. Revenues generated from international maritime commerce of merchant ships registered in Panama are exempt from taxation. Furthermore, the proceeds of the sale or transfer of a vessel registered in Panama are not subject to capital gains tax even when the transaction is executed in Panama.[108]

Establishing the beneficial ownership of a vessel using a flag of convenience such as Panama's is particularly difficult, as the true owners of IUU fishing vessels can be neatly hidden and backed by shell companies, joint-ventures and hidden owners and nationalities, incorporated by law firms operating in the country.

In addition, all six vessels owned by both companies – Saly Reefer, Gabu Reefer, Silver Ice, Flipper 3, Flipper 4, and Flipper 5 – are flagged to the Comoros, according to the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset. Comoros is a flag of convenience which, among other advantag-

105 Greenpeace. The Cost of Ocean Destruction (17 April 2017) *https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-africa-stateless/2018/10/154ab281-154ab281-the.cost_.of_.ocean_.destruction.pdf*

106 Greenpeace. Hope in West Africa ship tour, 2017. Summary of findings. (2017) *https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-africa-stateless/2018/10/7cf01664-7cf01664-hopeinwestafricashiptour_finalbriefing.pdf*

107 ICIJ Offshore Leaks Database. *https://offshoreleaks.icij.org/nodes/16283*

108 Panama Embassy in the UK. Advantages of the Panamanian Registry. *https://panamaembassy.co.uk/?page_id=115*

es, does not require vessel owners to pay taxes, and does not have any nationality or owner restrictions.[109]

In 2017, the European Union red-carded the Comoros for failing to support the fight against IUU fishing. The EU found that the Comoros was unwilling to control the activities of its flagged fishing vessels. According to the ruling, "most of the Comorian fleet has no connection to the country and operates in breach of national law, mainly in the waters of West Africa. These vessels have been found to disregard the laws applicable in the national waters they operate in, transhipping fish from one vessel to another, a practice related to the laundering of illegal catches."[110]

All these vessels have also been involved in flag hopping including using various flags of convenience. Saly Reefer for instance has carried the flags of Russia, Panama, Comoros and Moldova. On the other hand, Silver Ice has used the flags of Cyprus, Belize, Comoros, Moldova and most recently Cameroon. Meanwhile Gabu Reefer has used the flags of the Netherlands, Antigua and Bermuda, Panama, Comoros, Moldova and Cameroon.

Fishing & Cargo Services is not the only case of a major Latin American fishing company having as the legal owner someone appearing in an ICIJ investigation. Notably, **Paladines Hermanos** company from Ecuador owns four vessels included in our IUU list – Delia, Don Ramon, Julia D and Sansun Ranger – one of which was accused by the US authorities of being involved in shark finning.[111] According to the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, Paladines Hermanos wholly owns the Delia Investment Intl. Inc. and Delipesca SA subsidiaries, and the company's founder is Mr José Ramón Paladines Bazurto and appears in the Panama Papers.[112]

2.5. Spanish tuna giant Albacora SA, Europe´s largest reported IUU fishing company

The largest European fishing company involved in alleged and reported IUU cases is Albacora SA from Spain, with six of its vessels reported to be involved in IUU fishing Albacora is one of the world's leading producers of tuna, with a fleet of 18 vessels operating in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, though it remains a family-owned firm.[113] The company also owns three fish processing plants, two in Spain (Bermeo in the Basque Country and Galicia) and another one in Ecuador.

Four of the company's vessels – Albacora Nueve, Albacora Diez, Albacora Caribe and Galerna – were caught fishing for tuna without valid licenses in Liberian waters in 2011.

The largest European fishing company involved in alleged and reported IUU cases is Albacora SA from Spain which has received millions of dollars in EU and other state subsidies

109 Pharaohs Marine Consultants. *http://www.pharaohsmarine.com/services/ships-registration/ships-registration-under-comoros/*

110 EU. Fight against illegal fishing: Commission lists Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Comoros as non-cooperating, and issues warning to Liberia (23 May 2017) *https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/items/65987/en*

111 Pew. US names illegal fishing countries, now must act. (17 January 2013) *https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2013/01/17/us-names-illegal-fishing-countries-now-must-act*

112 ICIJ. Panama Papers. *https://offshoreleaks.icij.org/nodes/12070855*

113 Albacora SA. Web Page. *https://www.albacora.es/en/about-us/presence-around-the-globe/*

But OPAGAC, the organisation of Spanish producers of frozen tuna, arranged for the matter to be settled out of court for a payment of USD $250,000, and evaded blacklisting by the regional fisheries management organisation ICCAT, according to Greenpeace.[114] Albacora SA's current CEO, Ignacio Lachaga Bengoechea, is currently the president of OPAGAC, according to the Spanish company registry.

Another of its vessels, the Albacora Uno, was fined USD $5 million in June 2010 for illegal fishing inside the 200-mile United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the western and central Pacific Ocean over a two-year period. Later in the Pacific Marshall Islands, the vessel was caught in July 2012 with 18 shark carcasses on board. The Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority then fined the Spanish vessel USD $55,000 for violating their sanctuary. Later, the Albacora Uno and some of its crew members were fined USD $1 million by the Nauru District Court for six counts of illegal fishing within Nauru's waters. The master and the fishing master pleaded guilty of this accusation, but a financial settlement meant the vessel escaped blacklisting procedures at the Pacific Tuna Commission.[115]

Even though the company is registered in Spain, we found out through the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset that four of its vessels accused and reported to be involved in IUU fishing – Albacora Nueve, Albacora Diez, Albacora Caribe and Galerna – are owned through a subsidiary called Overseas Tuna Co. NV registered in Curacao which has very low effective tax rates.

According to Greenpeace, Albacora SA while being accused of IUU fishing also received € 1,166,432 (USD $1.18 million) in annual EU contributions from the Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between 2006 and 2011, and € 3,773,141 (USD $3.82 million) for the construction of Albacora Uno from Spanish government.[116] Greenpeace went as far as demanding that Albacora S.A. and OPAGAC come clean on all the IUU incidents and settlements they had been involved in since receiving EU subsidies to build vessels.[117]

More recently, the Albacora Uno was revealed to have gone dark between 2019 and 2020 while fishing in the Indian Ocean, meaning that it had disconnected its AIS system to avoid being tracked. Despite being owned by an entity in an EU member state, vessels are not bound by the EU law that mandates constant Automatic Identification System (AIS) use. However, they are still bound by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) which also applies to Spanish vessels.[118]

The report found that, on average, the Spanish-flagged purse seine fleet went dark for three quarters of the analysis period from the beginning of 2019 to the end of 2020. The Albacora Cuatro specifically spent a continuous period of nine months and 28 days with its AIS switched off.

114 Greenpeace. Real pirates plunder and steal. (21 October 2013) *https://www.greenpeace.org.au/blog/real-pirates-plunder-and-steal/*

115 Greenpeace. Monster boats: the scourge of the oceans.(November 2014) *https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-denmark-stateless/2018/10/34d6b397-34d6b397-gp_monsterboats_report_lores.pdf*

116 Greenpeace. Monster boats: the scourge of the oceans.(November 2014) *https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-denmark-stateless/2018/10/34d6b397-34d6b397-gp_monsterboats_report_lores.pdf*

117 Greenpeace. Real pirates plunder and steal. (21 October 2013) *https://www.greenpeace.org.au/blog/real-pirates-plunder-and-steal/*

118 Rattle, J., Duncan-Jones, G. Fishing Outside the Lines: widespread noncompliance in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries. Blue Marine Foundation (May 2022) *https://www.bluemarinefoundation.com/reports/noncompliance-in-indian-ocean-tuna-fisheries/*

Other Spanish vessels accused of "going dark" were the Itsas Txori, Txori Gorri, Txori Zuri and Txori Argi. They are all owned by another Spanish company called Compañía Internacional de Pesca y Derivados SA (INPESCA), according to the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, with Txori Argi being included in our IUU list together with two other vessels belonging to INPESCA.

According to Moody's Orbis database and the Spanish company registry accessed by the report authors, one of INPESCA´s main shareholders is a company called Euskaltuna Sociedad Limitada which owns 28.09 percent of the company shares. This company, in turn, according to this data sources is wholly owned by Albacora SA.

In addition, four of the Albacora vessels accused of IUU fishing are flagged to Curacao (Galerna and Albacora Nueve) and Panama (Albacora Caribe and Albacora Diez), regarded as jurisdictions where low effective taxes are paid. Also an investigation carried out by a Spanish newspaper in 2018 accused Albacora together with four other Spanish tuna companies of using these flags to avoid quota limits set by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to protect dwindling fish stocks.[119]

Opaque ownership

Reflecting the opaque nature of the fisheries sector surrounding the beneficial owners of companies accused of being involved in IUU fishing, there is very little information about the individual shareholders of Albacora SA. The company's current shareholders are Amui Corporation V Sociedad Limitada (43.82 percent of the shares), Alonso Escuris SL (20.42 percent). Jakobsland Investments SL (11 percent), Familia Garat (5 percent) and self-owned (3 percent).

However there is no data on the beneficial owners of these companies, despite Spain agreeing in April 2021 to incorporate the Directive (EU Fifth Anti-Money Directive) Laundering into Spanish law by means of Royal Decree-Law 7/2021. This directive carries out a reform regarding the Beneficial Owner Registry (*Registro de Titularidades Reales*), which sees this information become accessible to the public for the first time for anyone owning more than 25 percent of shares.[120]

The report authors contacted the Spanish Registry and were told that BO information for the companies above was only available at the time when they were established, and that this had not been updated since then. This information was confirmed when contacting the various commercial registers where these companies are registered. Spain's Ministry of Justice plans to create a single registry system which will centralise the entries of those beneficial owners from the databases of Spain's Mercantile Registry and General Council of Notaries, but this has not been created yet at the time of writing this report.

There is no data on the beneficial owners of these companies, despite Spain agreeing in April 2021 to incorporate the Directive (EU Fifth Directive on Anti-Money Laundering) into Spanish law

119 Aragó, L. Las artimañas de las empresas atuneras españolas para burlar las cuotas de pesca de África. La Vanguardia (15 November 2018) *Las artimañas de las empresas atuneras españolas para burlar las cuotas de pesca en África (lavanguardia.com)*

120 LeWants Lawyers and Accountants. The Reform of the Beneficial Owner Registry in Spain (4 April 2022) *The Reform of the UBO Registry in Spain - LAWANTS*

However, further investigations revealed at least some of the beneficial owners of Albacora SA, linked to the family that founded the company. Albacora SA was founded in 1974 by Jesús Alonso Fernández, an influential businessman in the Spanish province of Galicia, together with five other prominent business figures including Iñaki Lachaga.

Mr Fernández also founded Jealsa Rianxeira in 1958, a family-owned business which is now called Conservas Rianxeira SA[121] and is regarded as Spain´s largest tuna giant and Europe´s second largest tuna company.[122] Conservas Rianxeira SA until August 2012 part-owned Albacora SA (together with a now-extinct company called Onza de Oro) at the time of the IUU incidents in 2011 detailed above, though no ownership percentage is specified in the Orbis database.

Currently Conservas Rianxeira SA remains family-owned and controls 96 percent of Alonso Escuris SL shares which in turn owns 20.42 percent of Albacora SA. According to Conservas Rianxeira's website, Mr Fernández has been the vice president of the Albacora SA board since July 2018, combining this role with honorary president of Conservas Rianxeira SA.[123] This company is now controlled by his son Jesús Manuel Alonso Escurís.[124] [see Albacora tree]

Interestingly, the connection between Albacora SA and Conservas Rianxeira SA appears to be reflected in their vessels' activities. Conservas Rianxeira, together with Albacora SA, is one of the Spanish companies in the investigation mentioned above of the Spanish newspaper alleging that vessels had used third-country flags to avoid ICCAT tuna quota limits.[125] Also, one of the vessels of Conservas Rianxeira SA, the *Albacora Seis*, was caught with Albacora SA vessels fishing for tuna without valid licenses in Liberian waters in 2011, also mentioned above.

121 Jealsa web page. Una Rianxeira con formas de Sofia Loren. https://www.jealsa.com/en/a-rianxeira-with-forms-of-sophia-loren/

122 Fish Information and Services (FIS). Jealsa Rianxeira S.A. *FIS - Suppliers - Company Details (seafood.media)*

123 El Correo Gallego. Jesús Alonso F. (11 June 2021) *https://www.elcorreogallego.es/especiales/los-143-mas-influyentes-2021/28-jesus-alonso-f-XF8007264*

124 Jealsa web page. Una Rianxeira con formas de Sofia Loren. *https://www.jealsa.com/en/a-rianxeira-with-forms-of-sophia-loren/*

125 Aragó, L. Las artimañas de las empresas atuneras españolas para burlar las cuotas de pesca de África. La Vanguardia (15 November 2018) *https://www.lavanguardia.com/economia/20181115/452926425259/artimanas-empresas-atuneras-burlar-cuotas-pesca-golfo-guinea.html*

Shareholders

Mr Jesus Alonso Fernandez
(until 11/2013)
ALBACORA SA FOUNDER
IN 1958 - n/a %

Current vice president of the **Albacora SA board** since 25/7/2018

ALBACORA

and **Honorary President** of Conservas Rianxeira SA

RIANXEIRA

Conservas Rianxeira SA

RIANXEIRA

(family owned business)

Unknown Shareholdres

43.82%
AMUI Corporation V SL

Direct shareholder part-owner of Albacora SA *until 8/2012 together with Onza de Oro*
(no percentages given in Orbis)

96% owned by Conservas Rianxeira

Father of

Jesus Manuel Alonso Escuris
President of Conservas Rianxeira since 2021

20.42%
Alonso Escuris SL

3%
ALBACORA company shares

Unknown Shareholdres

11%
Jakobsland Investment SL

Unknown Shareholdres

5%
Familia Garat

OPAGAC

OPAGAC
(Spanish frozen tuna producers association)

Also president of

Ignacio Lachaga Bengoechea
Albacora ceo

ALBACORA

SUBSIDIES:

€1,166,432
(USD $1.18 million)
Annual EU contributions from Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between 2006 and 2011

(source: Greenpeace)

€3,773,141
(USD $3.82 million)
For construction of Albacora Uno from Spanish government

(source: Greenpeace)

Subsidiaries Companies

★ *Vessels are in IUU list*

Integral Fishing Services Inc *(Panama)*
- **Cape Coral** *(Panama)*
- **Galerna Lau** *(Panama)*

Overseas Tuna Co NV *(Curacao)*
- ★ **Albacora Nueve** *(Curacao)*
- ★ **Galerna** *(Curacao)*
- ★ **Albacora Caribe** *(Panama)*
- ★ **Albacora Diez** *(Panama)*
- **Draco** *(Seychelles)*

Interatun Ltd *(Seychelles)*
- **Patudo** *(Curacao)*
- **Pacific Star** *(Tanzania)*

Overseas Tuna Pacific SA *(Spain)*
- **Guayatuna Uno** *(Ecuador)*
- **Guayatuna Dos** *(Ecuador)*

Guayatuna SA *(Ecuador)*
- **Panama Tuna** *(Ecuador)*

Intertuna NV *(Curacao)*
- **Intertuna Tres** *(Seychelles)*

Galerna II *(Seychelles)*	**Albatun Dos** *(Spain)*	**Zahara Dos** *(unknown)*
Galerna III *(Seychelles)*	**Albatun Tres** *(Spain)*	
Albacan *(Spain)*	**Mar de Sergio** *(Spain)*	
★ **Albacora Quince** *(Spain)*	**Zahara Uno** *(Spain)*	
★ **Albacora Uno** *(Spain)*	**Salica Frigo** *(Spain)*	

3. Case studies: IUU fishing in Africa and Latin America

3.1. Argentina, uncontrolled IUU fishing (*case study updated March 2023)

Argentina has one of the most important fishing grounds in the world, attracting industrial vessels of different nationalities. Its waters have an enormous abundance and diversity of marine life, including more than 330 types of fish, nearly 120 deep-sea species, and a wide variety of invertebrates.

The country's commercial fishing industry generates an economic impact of USD $2.7 billion a year and represents 3.4 percent of its gross domestic product. The industry is driven by four species that represent 75 percent of the country's total catch: squid, hake, red shrimp and grenadier. The squid fishery is the second largest in the world by volume, and half of the world's catch comes from Argentina.

Foreign fishing vessels are attracted by high-value species and one of the richest fishing grounds in the world, many of them operating illegally or engaged in unregulated fishing. IUU fishing in Argentinian territorial waters is estimated to represent between USD $1 billion and USD $US2.6 billion each year[126]though a parliamentary draft resolution presented in 2020 referred to losses of USD $2.6 billion from illegal fishing alone in Argentinian territorial waters[127] considering that the annual exports of bottled wine from Argentina were valued at USD $817 million in 2021,[128]the estimated IUU fishing would representmore than twice the size of the Argentinian wine exports Squid is one of the main targets of vessels engaged in IUU fishing, which in turn is a strategic species in the food chain and the health of the biodiversity of the South Atlantic, therefore causing a large-scale impact on marine life systems in the South Atlantic.

126 Parlamentario.com Stefani: "La pesca ilegal genera una pérdida entre 1000 y 2600 millones de dólares para nuestro país" (7 February 2022) *https://www.parlamentario.com/2022/02/07/stefani-la-pesca-ilegal-genera-una-perdida-entre-1000-y-2600-millones-de-dolares-para-nuestro-pais/*

127 Argentina Parliament Draft Resolution (2020) https://www4.hcdn.gob.ar/dependencias/dsecretaria/Periodo2020/PDF2020/TP2020/6923-D-2020.pdf]

128 Wein.com Argentina reports record wine exports in 2021 (25 January 2022) *https://magazine.wein.plus/news/argentina-reports-record-wine-exports-in-2021-export-value-of-bottled-wine-reaches-historic-high*

Fishing regulation in Argentina

In 1998, the Federal Fisheries Law was enacted, by which the National Congress delegated the functions of management, control and regulation of the sector to the Federal Fisheries Council (CFP), which regulates, controls and supervises the fishing sector through research, exploration, monitoring and scientific development carried out by the National Institute for Fisheries Research and Development (INIDEP) the largest oceanographic institute in the Southern Hemisphere.

Argentina is a federal country where the states have their own legislative systems, and control and regulate fishing operations taking place in their ports and coasts. The fishing law and the creation of the CFP prompted the decision to establish a quota system, still in operation today. The system of Individual Transferable Catch Quotas (CITC) began with an initial distribution in 2009 and was fully consolidated in the 2010-2012 period.

According to data from the authorities, there is an average of one vessel every one and a half years sanctioned for IUU fishing, a fraction of the hundreds of vessels estimated to operate illegally in its waters

Within the fishing sector governed by the CITC system, there are other state agencies that are focused on controlling the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for fishing that extends up to 200 nautical miles from the coast. IUU fishing is commonplace, and controls are carried out by the Auxiliary Fisheries Police as a component part of the Integrated Fisheries Activity Control System (SICAP) together with the Argentine Navy. For this, it uses electronic ship tracking systems with satellite technology and patrols the sea with coast guard ships and planes.

The fleets that operate at mile 201 mostly fly the flags of China and Taiwan, South Korea and Spain. These vessels target fish species like Argentine shortfin squid and Argentine red shrimp which are vital to Argentina's economy and the diet of species such as tuna and swordfish. Many of these vessels turn off their satellite tracking systems for extended periods of time with no justification, potentially masking illegal behaviour such as entering Argentina's EEZ, crossing again beyond the mile 200 towards the high seas when detected by the coastguardas denounced in a recent investigation by environmental group Oceana.[129] The South Atlantic high seas does not have a regional fisheries management body to regulate fishing in these waters, so anyone can enter it, without registration, reporting or licencing requirements, meaning that vessels in these waters are engaged in unregulated fishing which directly impacts Argentina's fisheries resources, including artisanal and small-scale coastal fleets.

The Argentine Navy affirms that for years an average of 300 to 400 fishing vessels have been operating along the country's EEZ border carrying out IUU fishing activities; but recently the figure has been increasing to more than 500 vessels. According to media from the Argentine military sector: "the resources available to the Argentine Navy and the Prefecture are scarce, which makes patrol tasks difficult. Without submarines and with only one marine patrol plane in an operational state, the task of control and deterrence, in the face of more than 500 illegal vessels, becomes impossible, and any capture they may make is irrelevant in the presented scenario."[130]

129 Alberts, C. 'Dark' ships off Argentina ring alarms over possible illegal fishing. Mongabay (3 June 2021). *https://news.mongabay.com/2021/06/dark-ships-off-argentina-ring-alarms-over-possible-illegal-fishing/*

130 Olivera, J. Milla 201: Escenario de la pesca ilegal en Argentina. Zona Militar (13 February 2019) *https://www.zona-militar.com/2019/02/13/milla-201-escenario-de-la-pesca-ilegal-en-argentina/*

In IUU fishing, a very widespread modality called "transhipment" is used in which the vessels transfer their catch to the mother ships or 'reefers' and these, in turn, replenish them with fuel and food in international waters but close to the areas where they are conducting IUU activities; so that the fishing vessels can return to jurisdictional waters, remaining at sea for long periods of time, while the mother ship travels to unload at the ports of the countries that are turning a blind eye to IUU fishing activities, to return again to complete the cycles of transhipment and supply of the illegal fleet.

Until recently vessels captured in the EEZ waters engaged in illegal fishing were treated as if conducting a minor infringement and released shortly after paying a small fine. In 2020, the Argentine Parliament approved a new fine system which is variable according to the seriousness of the crime, with a floor of USD $300,000 and a maximum of USD $1.75 million. The highest penalty applies to foreign vessels, and the country's authorities may order the capture and retention of the vessel in port until payment of the fine is made. In the year of its sanction, the new law allowed the capture of three ships and the collection of fines for USD $US2.91 million, though as mentioned above in the Oceana investigation this does not seem to have deterred these illicit activities.

Hidden Owners of Vessels Involved in Illegal Fishing

According to data from the authorities, there is an average of one vessel every one and a half years sanctioned for IUU fishing (see table below), representing a fraction of the hundreds of vessels suspected of operating illegally in the country's waters.[131] These vessels have also sometimes been involved in violent situations, for example when the Argentinian authorities sank the Chinese vessel *Lu Yan Yuan Yu 10* in 2016 after trying to collide with the coastguard ship and resisting being seized.

Argentina should improve patrolling of its regional waters to prevent fishing vessels from operating illegally. To tackle IUU fishing beyond its EZZ, Argentina together with other coastal states in the South Atlantic should set up a marine protected area or regional fisheries management organisation and cooperate to patrol and regulate fishing fishing in high seas where distant water fleets can operate with impunity. They do so without having to comply with any registration requirements for operating or landing fish catches, making it easy to mix illegal and legal fish together for exports. The main importers of fish from Argentina, namely Spain, Italy, US, China and Brazil,[132] should also make greater efforts in supply chain transparency to ensure that fish at risk of being sourced from IUU fishing is not sold in their territory.

The main driver for the use of shell companies are distant water foreign vessels that fish beyond the 201 nautical mile limit. The vessel owners use shell companies to avoid being fined or sanctioned at the company and shareholder level when caught. When it comes to registered vessels with licences in Argentina, they need to be registered at the Argentinian company registry, but there too companies can declare a legal owner rather than the real beneficial owners.

Argentina does have a beneficial ownership registry, and it covers a range of legal vehicles: companies, partnerships, associations, and investment funds, which generally are omitted

131 Oceana. Oceana finds hundreds of vessels vanishing along Argentina's waters. (June 2021). https://usa.oceana.org/reports/oceana-finds-hundreds-vessels-vanishing-along-argentinas-waters/

132 Mercopress. Argentina fisheries exports in 2021 reached 515,000 tons; poor year for squid. (15 March 2022) *https://en.mercopress.com/2022/03/15/argentina-fisheries-exports-in-2021-reached-515-000-tons-poor-year-for-squid*

outside of the entities required to provide beneficial ownership information. Also, the Argentinian law has no threshold and the requirement to record beneficial owners is triggered when have a company has operations in the country, including owning assets, engaging in business transactions or having income subject to tax. This requirement also means engaging in fishing operations.[133]

Argentina, based on its beneficial ownership law, should mandate fishing companies and vessel owners to declare their beneficial owners in the beneficial ownership registry and make it a legal requirement to obtain a fishing licence. In the case of existing legal owners, it would also be important to exchange information or have access to public beneficial ownership registries elsewhere, especially in tax havens to find out the real owners of fishing vessels engaged in IUU fishing.

The lack of beneficial ownership transparency behind vessel registration in Argentina and abroad is reflected in the data we gathered. Of the 18 vessels we identified to be involved in IUU fishing in Argentinian waters between 2010 and May 2022, 16 of which appear in the government's official list (the other two taken from NGO and news reports), there was legal ownership information for only 15 of them, meaning a company identified as owning the vessel. From these, only seven vessels had some data on the beneficial owners.

In terms of nationalities of legal owners of IUU vessels we identified, six were Chinese, three from South Korea, two from Spain, one from Portugal and another from Japan, with four vessels unknown though probably are Chinese given that they were flagged to that country. Interestingly, one of these vessels, the *Jing Hua 626* caught by the authorities fishing illegally in 2018 belongs to a company, Yantai Beijing Deep-Ocean Fishery Company, which is wholly owned by the Chinese government.

ARGENTINA GOVERNMENT IUU FISHING LIST, JANUARY 2010 - MAY 2012

Vessel name	Nationality	Date captured
315 SUN HAE/ORYON 56	SOUTH KOREA	27/04/2010
LU RONG YU 6177	CHINA	24/12/2012
LU RONG YU 6178	CHINA	24/12/2012
FU YUAN YU 873	CHINA	16/06/2013
PISCATOR	SPAIN	01/07/2013
HU SHUN YU 809	CHINA	06/04/2015
LU JIAO NAN YUAN YU 177	CHINA	03/04/2015
LU JIAO NAN YUAN YU 178	CHINA	03/04/2015
HUA LI 8	CHINA	29/02/2016
LU YAN YUAN YU 010	CHINA	13/03/2016
PLAYA PESMAR UNO	SPAIN	04/02/2018
JIN YUAN 626	CHINA	21/02/2018
OYANG 77	SOUTH KOREA	07/02/2019
HUA XIANG 801	CHINA	01/03/2019
LU RONG YUAN YUN 668	CHINA	28/04/2020
CALVAO	PORTUGAL	03/05/2020

133 Knobel, A. (2020) 'Argentina finally has a beneficial ownership register. Now, it should make it public', https://taxjustice.net/2020/04/20/argentina-finally-has-a-beneficial-ownership-register-now-it-should-make-it-public/

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

3.2. Senegal fisheries: a deeply secretive sector

With more than 700 kilometres of coastline, Senegal has one of the richest fishing grounds in the world.[134] In 2021, this sector contributed 3.2 percent of the national GDP, with an annual production of 570,000 tonnes per year, 80 percent of which came from the artisanal fisheries sector. Fish and seafood contributing to 40 percent of animal protein intake[135] in the country where a fifth of children under five lack adequate nutrition and are stunted.[136]

There are no figures for estimated IUU fishing with the instances we detected in Senegal mainly coming from NGO reports, but in West Africa this practice is estimated to represent 37 percent of total seafood catches, the highest rate in the world.[137] The artisanal fishing sector is impacted by this, as catch numbers were reduced by 8.7 percent in 2018 in comparison with 2017 according to the latest figures available.[138]

This is also reflected in increasing fish prices. For instance, Julia Sarr, a housekeeper, explained to us that three years ago, a small red carp cost between 1,000 and 2,000 CFA francs (USD $1.6 to USD $3.2); today, the same small steak costs around 4,500 CFA francs (USD $7.2), with other fish like tanned grouper being even more expensive.

> *"Senegal has sold the sea to foreigners. Fish sellers say there´s no more fish in Senegal and that Senegalese fishermen are forced to fetch the fish in neighbouring Guinea, the Gambia and Mauritania. Life has become difficult, especially when you have a large family, so for dinner, some families prepare fondé (millet porridge) or tiéré moum (couscous made from millet and moringa leaves) which are cheaper, they cannot afford fish," she says.*

In Saint Louis in northern Senegal, the Coordinator of the local council of artisanal fishing, Oumar Dièye, told us that illegal fishing is widespread. "We're artisanal fishermen and very rarely see patrolling coastguard vessels. The authorities have given a specific area for industrial vessels to operate, but they don't respect this so illegal fishing is rampant," he said.

134 Ministère des Pêche et des Affaires Maritimes du Sénégal : Document introductif au Conseil interministériel sur la pêche, Juin 2013 (Page 5). *http://www.aprapam.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Document-introductif-duconseil-intrministpercentC3percentA9riel-sur-la-percentC3percentAAche_version-final.pdf*

135 FAO Statistics. *https://www.fao.org/fishery/fr/facp/sen?lang=fr*

136 USAID. Senegal: Nutrition Profile (November 2021) *https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Copy_of_tagged_Senegal-Nutrition-Profile.pdf*

137 Agnew DJ, Pearce J, Pramod G, Peatman T, Watson R, et al., "Estimating the Worldwide Extent of IllegalFishing" (Marine Resources Action Group and University of British Columbia, 2009). *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

138 Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Demographie (ANSD). Situation Econonomique et sociale du Senegal 2017-2018 (July 2021) *http://www.ansd.sn/ressources/ses/SES_2017-2018.pdf*

Foreign vessels have been accused of turning off their AIS (Automatic Identification Systems) to become invisible and avoid being spotted, allowing them to even enter marine protected areas. AIS data is available to the public, unlike other tracking monitoring systems. For instance, during a tour in Western African waters in 2017, the environment organisation Greenpeace found that 30 fishing vessels in Senegal had turned off their AIS.[139]

Senegalese government insists that fighting IUU fishing is one of its priorities. In 2015 the government reformed the 2008 Fisheries Code and increased the fines for vessels caught fishing illegally to a maximum of 1 billion CFA Francs (USD $1.5 million), five times more than the previous maximum amount. Cheikh Fall, head of the inspection and control division at the Directorate for the Protection and Supervision of Fisheries (DPSP), told us that this move has led to a decline in IUU offenses in the country but refused to provide any statistics.

Senegal has also been identified by the US government in June 2022 as one of five partners – together with Ecuador, Panama, Taiwan and Vietnam – to assist in building capacity to tackle IUU fishing.[140] This is mainly due to concerns over fighting IUU fishing as a natural resource crime that contributes to illicit financial flows, while also ensuring fish imported into the US market is less likely to be derived from illegal sources.

Senegal has also been identified by the US government in June 2022 as one of five partners – together with Ecuador, Panama, Taiwan and Vietnam – to assist in building capacity to tackle IUU fishing

Fishing transparency as a solution

There are many layers of secrecy in the sector. The government refuses to publish the fishing licenses granted to industrial vessels, and their catch per vessel. Vessels are not domestically registered, and secrecy also means that it is not possible to know who owns vessels as they are not on a registry. There is no public list of vessels caught for IUU fishing.

Between 2018 and 2019, several dozen fishing licenses were secretly granted to deep-sea fishing trawlers, leading to civil society organisations including Senegal's industrial ship owners' association GAIPES, to denounce these licenses that harm the ecosystem, as well as suspicious movements of Chinese and Turkish vessels.[141]

But between 2018 and 2019, several dozen fishing licenses were secretly granted to deep-sea fishing trawlers

In 2020, the environmental organisation Greenpeace revealed that Senegal's fisheries ministry has issued fishing licenses to vessels of a Chinese industrial fleet involved in IUU fishing in recent years. Among other vessels, the evidence showed that the government had secretly issued a license to the Chinese vessel, *Fu Yuan Yu 9889* on April 17, 2020.[142]

139 Greenpeace. The Cost of Ocean Destruction: report from Greenpeace ship tour of West African fisheries 2017 (17 April 2017) *https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-netherlands-stateless/2018/06/The_Cost_of_Ocean_Destruction.pdf*

140 White House. Background press call on the President's National Security memorandum on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. (27 June 2022) *https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/06/27/background-press-call-on-the-presidents-national-security-memorandum-on-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing/*

141 Gueye, M. Fraude sur les Licences de peche. Seneplus (29 June 2020) *https://www.seneplus.com/economie/fraude-sur-les-licences-de-peche*

142 Nwoye, C. Chinese trawlers with an illegal fishing record have been licensed by Senegal. Quartz Africa (9 October 2020) *https://qz.com/africa/1915624/senegal-okays-chinese-boats-with-illegal-fishing-record-greenpeace/*

According to Birahim Seck, Coordinator of Forum Civil, the difficulty to maintain the Dakar-Thiaroye Oceanographic Research Center (CRODT) leads to lack of scientific assessment in awarding fishing licenses. "Since 2016 there has been no direct evaluation of the fishery resource because of the unavailability of the vessel Itaf Dem which was to make this assessment," said Mr Seck.

The only information we have is on inspections. According to Senegal's National Agency of Statistics and Demography: "3,121 inspections and/or controls were carried out in 2019 compared to 2,412 in 2018, an increase of 29.4 percent." They add that: "This increase testifies to the efforts made in recent years in the context of strengthening fisheries surveillance and the application of measures to combat IUU fishing."[143] But there is no data on how many of these inspections led to fines for IUU fishing or other offences.

The beneficial owners and legal owners of vessels are also kept secret. Forum Civil told us they have repeatedly contacted the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy, as well as several of the agencies, to obtain information on the legal and beneficial owners of vessels responsible for IUU fishing, but without ever getting an answer. Birahim Seck, Coordinator from the Senegalese Civil Forum, said that "we certainly have a register of beneficial owners, but it only covers the extractive sector, mainly mining and hydrocarbons, not fisheries."

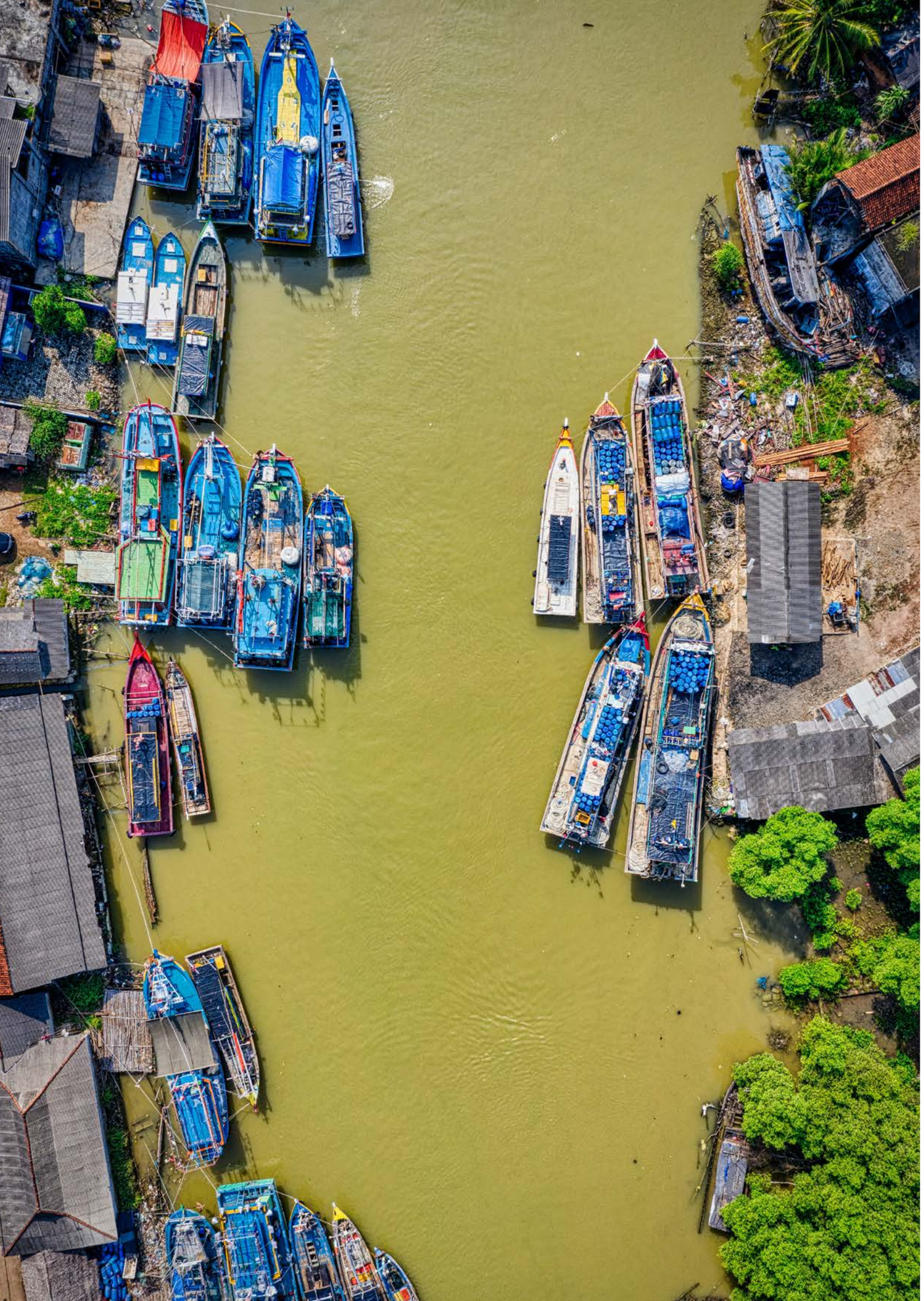
In February 2016, Senegalese president Macky Sall promised to join the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) whose standard requires implementing countries to update on the status of their beneficial ownership register and wider BO transparency.[144] However, the FiTI standard does not require the country to ensure that the beneficial ownership registry is made public, or even less publishing the beneficial owners of all vessels,[145] and in any case there has been no progress since then.[146]

143 Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Demographie (ANSD). Situation Econonomique et sociale du Senegal 2019 (January 2022) *http://www.ansd.sn/ressources/ses/chapitres/11-SES-2019_Peche-aquaculture.pdf*

144 FiTI Standard. **https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard**

145 FiTI Standard. *https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard*

146 FiTI. Senegal: Stakeholders call on President Sall to honor FiTI commitment. (4 March 2020) *https://www.fiti.global/stakeholders-call-on-president-sall-to-honor-fiti-commitment-in-senegal*



4. Illegal fishing vessels and owners: insufficient regulations

In recent years, there has been a push to increase financial transparency generally, especially in the registration of bank accounts, real estate and other assets, as well as tracking beneficial owners in general. This has received particular attention recently due to the war in Ukraine, where there has been a focus on the hidden wealth estimated to be USD $800 billion[147] of Russian oligarchs linked to the Kremlin.

The push for greater beneficial ownership transparency gained traction following the release of the Panama Papers in 2016, showing how powerful politicians, public figures and individuals had used more than 200,000 anonymous companies to shield their assets and possibly also avoid paying taxes.[148] The Pandora Papers released in October 2021 also raised awareness on this issue.[149]

The lack of financial transparency allows for a huge drain of resources from global South countries. For example, UNCTAD estimates that Africa loses every year USD $89 billion in illicit financial flows – cross border exchanges of value, monetary or otherwise, which are illegally earned, transferred or used – which dwarfs official development assistance the continent receives annually.[150]

This means that these countries have less funds to provide urgent social protection and assistance to their citizens amid the Covid-19 pandemic, a crisis compounded by the food and energy crisis brought about by the Ukraine war and the growing effects of climate change.

147 Novokmet, F., Piketty, T., Zucman, G. From Soviets to Oligarchs: Inequality and Property in Russia, 1905-2016 (August 2017) *https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23712/w23712.pdf*

148 ICIJ. The Panama Papers: Exposing the Rogue Offshore Finance Industry. (2016) *https://www.icij.org/investigations/panama-papers/*

149 ICIJ. Offshore havens and hidden riches of world leaders and billionaires exposed in unprecedented leak. (3 October 2021) *https://www.icij.org/investigations/pandora-papers/global-investigation-tax-havens-offshore/*

150 https://unctad.org/news/africa-could-gain-89-billion-annually-curbing-illicit-financial-flows

The World Bank for instance estimates that Covid-19 and worsening inequality alone will push 198 million people into extreme poverty in 2022, reversing two decades of progress, while Oxfam estimates that rising global food prices will push 65 million more people into extreme poverty in 2022.[151]

Positively, more countries are introducing beneficial ownership reforms. According to Tax Justice Network, as of 2022, 97 out of 141 surveyed jurisdictions had approved laws requiring beneficial ownership to be registered with a government authority,[152] up from 81 out of the 133 surveyed in 2020.[153] Ecuador is hailed as a model for publicly available beneficial ownership information, while other global South countries like Ghana and Kenya launched their registries in 2020.

The report also highlighted that countries were setting lower thresholds in their beneficial ownership definitions, below the 25 percent accepted level, meaning that more individuals would be identified as beneficial owners. Five countries – Argentina, Botswana, Ecuador and Saudi Arabia – even required anyone with just one share to be identified as a beneficial owner. Ghana's registry has no threshold for Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs), and a lower threshold for high-risk sectors such as extractive industries, but it excludes fisheries from the high-risk sector list.

This has been reflected in the move to improve beneficial ownership information for industries with a direct impact on the environment. The Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) Illegal Wildlife Trade report highlighted that the widespread use of shell and front companies enabled the import and export of endangered wildlife products, as well as the laundering or co-mingling of associated products.[154] This dispelled the myth that the profits of wildlife trafficking are moved solely in cash, emphasising the need to uncover the BOs of companies linked to environmental crimes.

Importantly, the G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' Communiqué[155] released in May 2021 welcomed "discussions by Finance Ministers on strengthening beneficial ownership transparency to better tackle the illicit financial flows stemming from illegal wildlife trade [IWT] and other illicit threats to nature."

4.1. Financial transparency in fisheries, a missing link

Despite the progress, the fisheries sector is particularly lagging behind the move towards greater financial transparency compared to other sectors. For instance, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was launched in 2002 to facilitate

The fisheries sector is particularly lagging behind the move towards greater financial transparency compared to other sectors

151 Oxfam. First crisis, then catastrophe. (12 April 2022). *https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-04/Oxfam%20briefing%20-%20First%20Crisis%20Then%20Catastrophe_0.pdf*

152 Tax Justice Network. Financial Secrecy Index 2022. https://fsi.taxjustice.net/

153 Harari, M., Knobel, A., Meinzer, M., Palansky, State of Play of Beneficial Ownership – Update 2020. Tax Justice Network (1 June 2020) *https://taxjustice.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/State-of-play-of-beneficial-ownership-Update-2020-Tax-Justice-Network.pdf*

154 FATF Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade (June 2020). *https://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/Money-laundering-and-illegal-wildlife-trade.pdf*

155 G7 Climate and Environment: Ministers' Communiqué, London, 21 May 2021. *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting-may-2021-communique/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-communique-london-21-may-2021*

the voluntary disclosure by governments and firms, requiring that the beneficial owners of extractive companies are disclosed.[156] In total, 55 countries have joined this initiative but this only covers oil, gas and mineral resources, but fisheries is not included.

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) has attempted to cover this gap, addressing the importance of beneficial ownership in its standard. The FiTI standard requires implementing countries to publish information on the country's legal definition of beneficial ownership, the availability of a public register, the rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by companies to corporate regulators, stock exchanges or agencies regulating the access to fisheries. Finally, such countries must also disclose information on the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency.[157]

However, the FiTI standard asks countries to only report on their *status* of implementing public beneficial ownership registries, rather than requiring it as part of adopting the FiTi standard.[158] FiTI is also a country-centred voluntary initiative, meaning that a country's government need to initiate the whole process.[159] Also until now, only seven countries have committed to adopt this standard – Mauritania, Seychelles, Cabo Verde, Ecuador, Madagascar, São Tomé and Príncipe and Senegal – with various levels of progress.

Positively, there is growing recognition about the importance of increasing beneficial ownership transparency in the fisheries sector to stem the growth of IUU fishing. The European Union for example has emphasised its commitment to identify those responsible for IUU fishing, as part of its new agenda on international ocean governance.[160]

Meanwhile, after more than two decades of negotiations, in June 2022 the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreed to ban subsidies to fishing vessels and operators found to engage in IUU fishing, in addition to those fishing in overfished stocks and fishing in the high seas outside the control of regional fisheries management organisation. The treaty defines 'operator' as "the owner of a vessel, or any person, who is in charge of or directs or controls the vessel. involved in IUU fishing."The WTO in turn should also use the stronger definition of the 'beneficial owner' rather than an 'operator' to align its terminology and definitions with the internationally accepted standards on ownership registration.[161]

However the framework to identify the vessel owners is simply not in place, questioning these commitments. Beneficial ownership information continues to be "rarely, if ever, collected during the licensing or vessel registration process."[162] A study by the OECD found that only half of the countries from this organisation require information about the benefi-

156 EITI Beneficial Ownership. *https://eiti.org/beneficial-ownership*

157 FiTI Standard. *https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard*

158 FiTI Standard. *https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard*

159 S. Widjaja, T. Long, H. Wirajuda, et al. 2019. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Associated Drivers. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. *https://oceanpanel.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Illegal-Unreported-and-Unregulated-Fishing-and-Associated-Drivers.pdf*

160 European Commission. Questions and Answers on International Ocean Governance (24 June 2020) *https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_3744*

161 World Trade Organisation. Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. (17 June 2022) *https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/MIN22/W22.pdf&Open=True*

162 Horn, P., Fiore, G. Better Tracking of Vessel Ownership Needed to Fight Illegal Fishing. Pew Charitable Trust (20 September 2020) *https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/09/20/better-tracking-of-vessel-ownership-needed-to-fight-illegal-fishing*

cial owner for vessels fishing on the high seas, and even less (39 percent) for vessels fishing in domestic waters.[163] This proportion could safely be assumed to be much lower for other countries especially in the global South, given that the OECD includes richer jurisdictions with more advanced regulations.

A separate OECD study which surveyed 26 countries from this organisation as well as seven other countries including China, Argentina and Thailand, also found that only one in three respondents had a legal framework mandating tax authorities to co-operate and share information with fisheries authorities to ease BO identification, and only one in six are fully implementing it.[164]

Two binding international instruments – the 1993 FAO Compliance Agreement[165] and the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement[166] – require flag states to maintain a national record of fishing vessels and fishing authorisations, as well as ensuring compliance with conservation and management measures, but beneficial ownership is not mentioned either.

There are also non-binding international agreements such as the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Flag State Performance and the FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing, providing further guidance to flag states. This latter one specifically calls on all countries to "cooperate to identify those nationals who are the operators or beneficial owners of vessels involved in IUU fishing."[167] However, in practice there tends to be no immediate consequences on flag states that fail to implement these agreements[168] and, as mentioned before, this instrument is voluntary.

Even the most advanced countries and jurisdictions fighting IUU fishing do not require beneficial ownership information. This is the case of the EU IUU control regulation which requires catch documentation and the US Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP). Both initiatives require information related to the identity of the vessel, the captain, licensing and registration, but they currently fall short of requiring the identity of the beneficial owner of the vessel.

4.2. Lack of IUU vessel data

This problem is compounded by the absence of a global centralised database of IUU vessels fully accessible to national authorities and the public. How can one find the owners of vessels operating illegally, when one does not even know the name and circumstances of the vessels that have committed the offence in the first place?

Global centralised database of IUU vessels fully accessible to national authorities and the public

Even the more advanced jurisdictions are failing to publish their lists of IUU vessels. According to the OECD survey, only 19 percent of respondents said they fully implemented the legal provision mandating the publication of lists of vessels identified as engaging in IUU fishing. Meanwhile 40 percent do not even publish their national list of domestic vessels authorised to fish in their domestic waters known as Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) set as 200 nautical miles off a state's coastline where most fishing operations take place.[169]

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) have attempted to address this gap. These organisations play a key role in initiating and coordinating efforts against IUU fishing, particularly with respect to straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, which migrate through or occur in multiple jurisdictions.

However, protocols for sharing IUU vessel lists currently in place are not standardised and practices vary between RFMOs. Moreover, only a few RFMOs have provisions for imposing sanctions on member countries for not adhering to adopted conservation and management measures and even when provisions are in place, the implementation and reporting does not appear systematic.[170]

RFMOs also publish individual lists of IUU vessels which are combined historically by Trigg Mat Tracking, resulting in the Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List. This provides "the best available, up to date information on all fishing vessels that appear on the IUU vessels lists published by RFMOs and related organisations."[171]

However, this list only includes some 350 vessels and is widely regarded as a small fraction of the real number of vessels involved in IUU fishing. A source at the Canadian fisheries agency told the authors of this report that the RFMO lists are highly political, with different countries successfully lobbying for their vessels not to be included in this list due to reputational issues, resulting in the list only showing those vessels involved in high profile cases.

The case of a Russian fishing vessel, the *Palmer*, highlighted this issue. As reported by China Dialogue, on 1 January 2020, a patrol aircraft operated by the New Zealand Navy spotted this vessel fishing in waters closed for the season, communicating the findings to the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) which is one of the RFMOs.[172]

New Zealand then contacted Russia to request an investigation be opened, but the Russian fishing authorities replied that checks of location data from the *Palmer*'s vessel monitoring

163 OECD. Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing: Where countries stand and where efforts should concentrate in the future. (30 November 2018) *https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=TAD/FI(2017)16/FINAL&docLanguage=En*

164 OECD Review of Fisheries 2020. *https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/oecd-review-of-fisheries-2020_7946bc8a-en#:~:text=Based%20on%20the%20latest%20available,and%20for%20the%20international%20community.*

165 FAO Compliance Agreement, Article IV (1993) *https://www.fao.org/3/X3130M/x3130m.pdf*

166 UN Fish Stocks Agreement, Article 18 (1995) *https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_20years/1995FishStockAgreement_ATahindro.pdf*

167 FAO. International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (2001) *https://www.fao.org/3/y1224e/Y1224E.pdf*

168 Environmental Justice Foundation 'Off the hook: how flags of convenience let illegal fishing go unpunished. (2020) *https://ejfoundation.org/resources/downloads/EJF-report-FoC-flags-of-convenience-2020.pdf*

169 OECD Review of Fisheries 2020. *https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/oecd-review-of-fisheries-2020_7946bc8a-en#:~:text=Based%20on%20the%20latest%20available,and%20for%20the%20international%20community.*

170 OECD. Combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing: Where countries stand and where efforts should concentrate in the future. (30 November 2018) *https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=TAD/FI(2017)16/FINAL&docLanguage=En*

171 Combined IUU Vessel List. *https://iuu-vessels.org*

172 Chen, J. Controversy over Russian vessel in Antarctica reveals CCAMLR shortcomings. (12 January 2021). China Dialogue *https://chinadialogueocean.net/en/fisheries/15935-controversy-over-russian-vessel-in-antarctica-reveals-ccamlr-shortcomings/*

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

Illegal fishing vessels and owners: insufficient regulations

system (VMS) showed it had been 800 nautical miles away from the site of the alleged activity, and that therefore no breach had occurred, though it did not provide any proof. So, on Russia's insistence, the *Palmer* was not listed as an IUU vessel and was able to continue fishing as normal in Antarctic waters that season.

Making matters worse, the vessels included in current IUU lists, even if publicly available, represent only the tip of the iceberg of IUU fishing taking place globally. The reason is that the majority of these activities take place in coastal areas of global South countries or the high seas where there is most limited governance and enforcement capacity, an issue that has not been addressed seriously until now.[173] This is reflected, for example, in the case of Argentina where we found that the government has sanctioned an average of one-and-a-half vessels every year accused of IUU fishing, despite reports of hundreds of vessels allegedly operating illegally at the edge of its territorial waters.

The vessels included in current IUU lists, even if publicly available, represent only the tip of the iceberg of IUU fishing taking place globally

173 Stimson Center, Shining a Light: The Need for Transparency Across Distant Water Fishing. (2019) *https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/Stimson%20Distant%20Water%20Fishing%20Report.pdf*

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Few people doubt that the oceans are being exploited at unsustainable levels, threatening the livelihoods of millions of people especially living in global South countries most affected by the climate change and the global food crisis brought about by the war in Ukraine. More than 90 percent of assessed fish stocks are fully exploited, overexploited or depleted, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).[174]

There are many reasons for overfishing including countries granting too many fishing licenses and outright mismanagement on fisheries resources. In this scenario, IUU fishing plays a key role, accounting for as much as one fifth of the global fisheries catch, worth USD $10 billion to USD $23.5 billion annually,[175] making this the third most lucrative natural resource crime after timber and mining.[176]

However, most of the IUU fishing literature focuses on law enforcement capabilities of nations which suffer most from illicit fishing instances. Most nations have largely ignored the role of financial secrecy plays in hiding the beneficial owners of IUU vessels, allowing them to continue operating unhindered and avoid being punished.

In this report, we attempt to bridge this knowledge gap, highlighting the importance of this issue which, unless addressed, will hamper any efforts to stem IUU fishing. We reveal that, as was widely suspected, most IUU fishing takes place in global South countries which have weaker monitoring and enforcement capabilities, especially West Africa where 40 percent of reported IUU cases were located.

174 FAO. 2020. ***The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action.*** Rome. *https://doi.org/10.4060/ca9229en*

175 Agnew, D.J., Pearce, J., Pramod, G., Peatman, T., Watson, R., Beddington, J.R. and Pitcher, T.J. (2009) 'Estimating the worldwide extent of illegal fishing', PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570. *https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0004570*

176 Reid, A., Dury-Agri, J.R., Brush, A., Copeland, D. (4 June 2021) 'The Role of Beneficial Ownership in Combating IUU Fishing'. RUSI. *https://shoc.rusi.org/blog/the-role-of-beneficial-ownership-in-combating-iuu-fishing/*

We also identify the top 10 companies behind this practice, eight of which are from China and the other two from Colombia and Spain. However, even using the most advanced data sources available, we were able to find some beneficial ownership

information regarding shareholders for only 16.7 percent of the vessels reported to be engaged in IUU fishing, with majority shareholder data for only very few cases.

Worryingly, some of the companies have direct links and connections with governments, such as Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd from China which appears at the top of the list, and operates some of its vessels under a subsidiary company 8 percent owned by the China Agriculture Industry Development Fund Co. Ltd. This company is also listed in the Nasdaq and incorporated in the Cayman Islands which is regarded as a tax haven.[177] The China National Overseas Fisheries Corporation Ltd. (CNFC) is state-owned and appears second on the list, while Albacora SA, the largest European company in the IUU list, has received millions of dollars in subsidies from the EU and the Spanish government.

In the face of this crisis, major players such as the EU, the United States and Japan, which together account for 55 percent of the seafood market, have recently emphasised their commitments to tackle IUU fishing and make beneficial ownership more transparent. However, as we explain in the report, very little has been done to eliminate the drivers that enable this financial secrecy to happen in the first place, such as the use of shell companies, joint ventures and flags of convenience.

Vessel operators for the most part still do not need to register the beneficial ownership information when requesting a fishing license or registering a vessel, many fisheries agreements remain secret and most countries do not reveal their IUU lists except for very few exceptions

Most vessel operators do not need to register the beneficial ownership information when requesting a fishing license or registering a vessel, fisheries agreements remain secret and most countries do not reveal their IUU lists except for very few exceptions. Meanwhile, the fisheries sector is still ignored in measures to increase transparency in extractive sectors generally. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which was launched in 2002 to facilitate voluntary disclosure by governments and firms, requiring that the beneficial owners of extractive companies are disclosed.[178] In total, 55 countries have joined this body but this only covers oil, gas and mineral resources, not fisheries.

All this suggests a continued lack of political will to resolve the growing problem of IUU fishing and end financial secrecy surrounding this practice which is so damaging especially for global South coastal countries. Therefore, it is imperative that the following **key transparency and other reforms** are urgently adopted to end this practice.

• **Public beneficial ownership registration** should be required when requesting a fishing licence, fishing authorisation, joint ventures or registration to their flag. This can be achieved by including fisheries in national beneficial ownership registries in all jurisdictions, with information made available to the public to end the use of shell companies.

177 PWC Tax Summaries. *https://taxsummaries.pwc.com/cayman-islands/corporate/taxes-on-corporate-income*

178 EITI Beneficial Ownership. *https://eiti.org/beneficial-ownership*

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

The EU, the United States and Japan, which together account for 55 percent of the seafood market, have recently emphasised their commitments to tackle IUU fishing and make beneficial ownership more transparent. However, as we explain in the report, very little has been done to eliminate the drivers that enable this financial secrecy to happen in the first place

- **Fisheries should be included as an extractive industry** in key initiatives including the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and other global and regional initiatives concerning regulation and transparency of extractive industries. No ownershipthreshold should be applied as fisheries is a high-risk sector.

- **Supply chain due diligence** requirements should be extended across supply chains and to IUU fishing and other fisheries-related crimes as part of wider due diligence requirements on products natural resource crimes, allowing for barring companies and vessels engaged in IUU fishing from lucrative export markets.

- **Governments should publish an up-to-date list of IUU vessels** allowing the use of fines and sanctions on the companies and real owners. This list should be also collated internationally under IMO-FAO auspices, allowing institutions focusing on fisheries management and Illicit Financial Flows to work together.

- **Improve monitoring capacity by coastal state governments** by supporting their coast guards with help of external development assistance, requiring automatic vessel monitoring and vessel Automatic Identification Systems to be enforced.

Annex 1: Data and Methodology

The report has sought to gather data from various sources to build a comprehensive list of industrial and semi-industrial vessels operating globally which have been reported to be involved in IUU fishing, as opposed to gathering evidence of individual *instances* of offenses taking place. The period covered in this study spans from January 2010 to May 2022.

One source was the regional fisheries management organisations' (RFMOs) individual lists of IUU vessels which are combined historically by Trigg Mat Tracking, resulting in the Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List.[179] This provides information including vessel name, IMO number and date and details of the offence and is publicly available.

We also used a variety of other open sources such as the IHS Sea-Web portal, NGO reports, and news reports from reputed organisations to expand this IUU list. Data was also gathered directly from government agencies, specifically from the Argentinian and Guinean governments, as well as IUU fishing notices published by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA).

At the time of writing, Chinese IUU notices were only available for the years 2018 to 2020, but these still represent an important source of information as they contain vessel and company names, details of the IUU fishing offence, sanctions imposed and sometimes geographical location specifying where the offenses took place.

Once the IUU list was gathered, we analysed the vessels' legal owners and tried to gather information about their beneficial owners i.e. the natural person(s) who directly or indirectly control the company or receive economic benefits from it *at the time of the reported*

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179 Combined IUU Vessel List. *IUU Vessel List (iuu-vessels.org)*

offenses. This was done mainly by using the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, the most important source of fishing vessel information in the world.[180] This provides some information on legal owners, beneficial owners, IMO numbers and other data about vessels.

We complemented this search by using the Moody's Orbis database, regarded as the largest dataset of companies in the world, as well as information from government agencies when IUU vessels' legal owners were identified (mainly in the case of China) and in a few cases using data from reports from reputed NGOs such as Greenpeace.

We contacted all companies named in the report for comment and to understand whether they have implemented any measures to ensure the sustainability of their fleets in the future, but did not receive any replies.

The fisheries sector is extremely opaque and the vast majority of governments do not publish the lists of vessels caught engaged in IUU fishing

Data limitations

The fisheries sector is extremely opaque and most governments do not publish the lists of vessels caught engaged in IUU fishing. This, combined with the secrecy of the operations and lack of monitoring and control capacity by governments, results in any information gathered for this report being limited in scope and reflecting only part of IUU operations taking place globally regardless of how many different sources were used to build the IUU list.

The Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List for instance which is regarded as the most complete dataset in the sector only includes some 350 vessels, a number that is even smaller when only considering vessels involved in IUU fishing from 2010, not before. This represents a small fraction of the real number of vessels believed to be involved in IUU fishing, forcing us to use a variety of other sources such as NGO reports.

Argentina clearly reflects this constraint, as we found out that the country's IUU list included fewer than two sanctioned fishing vessels every year. This is despite widespread evidence indicating that hundreds of vessels from China, Spain and other global fishing powers are operating at the edge of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) set as 200 nautical miles off the coastline, entering its coastal waters unhindered (see Chapter 3: Argentina).[181]

Similarly, there is a lack of information regarding the legal owners of fishing vessels, not to mention individual beneficial owners. The Combined IUU Fishing Vessel List for instance only shows legal ownership information for some vessels and only identifies current legal owners, not those at the time when the IUU offense took place.

We attempted to bridge this information gap by using the S&P Lloyd's Global IHS Markit dataset, searching for the vessels' legal and beneficial ownership at the time of the reported offense. However, despite its extraordinary breadth, this database only includes information for fishing vessels above 100 GT and only vessels with International Maritime Organisation

180 IHS Markit *IHS Markit | Leading Source of Critical Information*

181 Carrere, M. Cientos de barcos chinos pescan otra vez frente a Argentina. Mongabay (21 April 2021) *https://es.mongabay.com/2021/04/cientos-de-barcos-chinos-estan-frente-a-argentina/*

(IMO) numbers. This means that even many IUU vessels included in the RFMO lists are not shown, making it harder to identify their legal owners. Also this dataset does not offer information about beneficial owners and shareholders of these companies, except in very few exceptions, which explains why we resorted to using the Moody's Orbis database.

Data confidence

The IUU list gathered for this report covers a large variety of sources across various geographical jurisdictions, providing as balanced a picture as possible on IUU activities. This method uses a novel combination of datasets to reveal the vessels involved in IUU fishing and their legal and beneficial owners which has not been done in this scale until now.

Offences reported by official sources such as government agencies and RFMOs, and especially those that have resulted in sanctions, are associated with a higher degree of certainty compared to offences reported by NGOs and reputed media outlets that have not been confirmed by the relevant coastal or flag states, or competent regional management fisheries bodies, even though the level of confidence that these vessels were engaged in IUU activities is very high by the evidence provided and the fact that there reports and stories were published.

For this study, we decided to maintain a conservative approach and did not include vessels accused of engaging in IUU fishing using remote Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) monitoring. Even though AIS evidence often provides strong evidence of alleged IUU violations taking place by detecting vessels entering marine protected areas or showing fishing patterns on restricted areas or areas where they do not have a license to operate, these still need to be confirmed by the relevant coastal or flag state, or competent regional fisheries body.

Despite the challenges, we were able to identify 972 industrial and semi-industrial vessels reported to be involved in IUU fishing globally, identifying the companies that are identified as legal owners for 421 vessels, representing 43.3 percent of the total. This is three times more than the number of vessels included in RFMO lists for offenses which took place from 2010, totalling 286 fishing vessels. Of the data used for this report, 14.9 percent was gathered from official government sources, 27.4 percent from regional fisheries management organisations and 55.6 percent from major NGOs and reputed news organisations (see table below).

Table: Sources of data on IUU fishing incidents analysed in this study

Sources of data	Number of vessels	percentage of total
Official (government agencies)	146	14.9 percent
Regional fisheries management organisations	286	27.4 percent
NGO and news reports	540	55.6 percent

TOTAL	**972**

Annex 2: Top 10 companies' fishing vessels reported to be engaged in IUU fishing

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Pingtan Marine Enterprise Ltd (Fujian Pingtan County Ocean Fishery)	Fu Yuan Yu 7861	Suspected illegal transhipment	2017	NGO - C4ADS	Lloyd's	
	Fu Yuan Yu 7862	Suspected illegal transhipment	2017	NGO - C4ADS	Lloyd's	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9607	Involved in illegal transshipment of some 43 tons of sharks with mothership Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999 which is listed in Chinese IUU notice	2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9608		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9609		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9610		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9611		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9612		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9613		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9614		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9615		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9616		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9617		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9618		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9619		2017	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9620		2018	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	
	Fu Yuan Yu 9621		2019	NGO - Sea Shepherd	NGO - Sea Shepherd (*CVL)	

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
China National Overseas Fisheries Corp CO Ltd (CNFC)	Zhong Shui 9418	Fishing in prohibited area; GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Zhong Shui 9419	Fishing in prohibited area; GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Soleil 7	Prohibited mesh size	2012	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Soleil 9	Prohibited mesh size	2011	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Soleil 11	No valid license	2012	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Soleil 66	No valid license	2012	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Soleil 67	Listed IUU fishing	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Soleil 68	Refusal to comply	2012	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Minyu 701	Prohibited mesh size	n/a	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	SHUN CHANG 3 (RFMO name: 3 Choyu)	Vessels greater than 24m not included in ICCAT Record of Vessels. Seen fishing in the Mediterranean during closed season	2019	RFMO	Lloyd's	
	CNFC 24	Prohibited mesh size	2012	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	CNFC 9314	Fishing illegally	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	ZHONG SHUI 9201	GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	ZHONG SHUI 9412	GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	ZHONG SHUI 9416	GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	ZHONG SHUI 9417	GT inconsistencies (including under-declared)	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Dalian Ruitaifeng Pelagic Fishery Co Ltd	Lian Run 28	Beacon off. Presence of a device having the effect of making the opening of the mesh smaller than the minimum authorized opening	2017	Guinea govt	Lloyd's	
	Lian Run 34	Operating illegally in Guinean waters; illegal possession of shark fins; illegal application of nets	2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lian Run 47	Operating illegally in Guinean waters; illegal possession of shark fins; illegal application of nets	2017	China govt	China govt	
	unknown vessel	Practices violating against rules (not specified)	2015	China govt	China govt	
	unknown vessel	Practices violating against rules (not specified)	2015	China govt	China govt	
	unknown vessel	Practices violating against rules (not specified)	2015	China govt	China govt	
	Lian Run 22	Prohibited mesh size	2011	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Lian Run 23	Catching prohibited species	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Lian Run 24	Fishing in prohibited zone. Catching prohibited species	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	NGO - Greenpeace	
	Lian Run 35	Prohibited mesh size	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Lian Run 37	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Lian Run 41	Using net mesh size smaller than authorised	2017	Guinea govt	Lloyd's	
	Lian Run 46	Destruction of fishing gear from artisanal fishers	2017	Guinea govt	Lloyd's	

*CVL (and Company Vessel List)

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Quingdao Ronchang ocean Fishery Co., Ltd (subsidiary of Seacon Shipping Group Ltd)	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 185	Qingdao Rongchang Ocean Fishery Co., Ltd. "Lu Huang Yuan Yu 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199 privately changed the mode of operation, changed from purse seine to trawl, and sent more than 30 illegally built fishing boats abroad, smuggling more than 3,000 tons of fish into the country. After investigation and verification, the company's unauthorized change of operation mode is true. The decision ordered the company to immediately stop the production of 10 fishing vessels.	2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 186		2016	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 187		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 188		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 189		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 195		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 196		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 197		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 198		2017	China govt	China govt	
	Lu Huang Yuan Yu 199		2017	China govt	China govt	

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Pescatun de Colombia SA	Amanda S	Discarding tuna in violation of IATTC measures	2011	US govt	Lloyd's	
	American Eagle	Discarding tuna in violation of IATTC measures	2011	US govt	Lloyd's	
	Cabo de Hornos	Shark finning	2012	US govt	Lloyd's	
	GRENADIER	Discarding tuna in violation of IATTC measures	2011	US govt	Lloyd's	
	Nazca	Shark finning	2012	US govt	Lloyd's	
	SANDRA C	Discarding tuna in violation of IATTC measures	2011	US govt	Lloyd's	
	DOMINADOR I	Operating in an RFMO without authorisation. Colombia did not renew vessel's fishing license and confined vessel to port.	2011	US govt	Lloyd's	
	Maria Isabel C	Shark finning	2012	US govt	Lloyd's	
	Sea Gem	Fishing inside marine protected area	2011	NGO - Global Fishing Watch	Lloyd's	
	MARTA LUCIA R	Operating in an RFMO without authorisation	2011	RFMO	Lloyd's	

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Fuzhou Dongxinlong Ocean Fishing Co., Ltd.	Fu Yuan Yu 997	Unauthorized exit of Chinese border without going through needed formalities; obtain approval documents for distant-water fishing by faking documents; unauthorized relocation of vessel monitoring facility for government subsidies	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 998		2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 70	Modify parameters of vessels during shipbuilding without approval, including length, width, weight, etc., which are not in compliance with the vessel certificate (in order to receive more government subsidies)	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 71		2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 72		2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 73		2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 75		2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 76		2018	China govt	China govt	
Rongcheng Rongyuan Fishery Co Ltd	LU RONG YUAN YU 880	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 668	n/a	2020	Argentina govt	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 875	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 876	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 877	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 878	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	
	LU RONG YUAN YU 879	Suspected illegal transhipments	2018	NGO - Stop Illegal Fishing	Lloyd's	

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Dalian Bo Yuan Ocean Fishing	Bo Yuan 1	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 2	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 5	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 6	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 7	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 8	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Bo Yuan 9	Fishing in prohibited zone	2014	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
Fujian Zhengguan Fishery Development Co Ltd	Fu Yuan Yu 701	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 702	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 703	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 704	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 706	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	
	Fu Yuan Yu 707	Suspected illegal use of delta tiger net	2018	China govt	China govt	

Fishy networks: uncovering the companies and individuals behind illegal fishing globally

Company	Vessel Name	Details offense	Date offense	IUU violation source	Ownership Information source	Flag at time offence
Albacora SA	Albacora Uno	June 2010: Fined $5 million for illegal fishing inside the 200-mile United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the western and central Pacific Ocean over a two-year period after reaching a settlement with NOAA (https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/albacora-noaa-reach-settlement). July 2012: Fined US$55,000 for illegally fishing sharks in the northern Pacific. October 2013: Fined US$1 million for IUU fishing inside the Nauru EEZ.	2013	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	GALERNA	Galerna was impounded on Friday 1st July 2011 on various offences ranging from absence of fisheries ministry observers onboard to the absence of transponders in the vessel, among others.	2011	RFMO	Lloyd's	
	Albacora Caribe	In 2011 in West African waters, the vessels Albacora Quince, Nueve, Diez, Seis and Caribe were caught fishing for tuna without valid licenses in the Liberian EEZ. But their fishing association OPAGAC arranged for the matter to be settled out of court (and out of the headlines) for a payment of $250,000, managing to evade being blacklisting by the regional fisheries management organisation ICCAT	2011	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Albacora Quince		2011	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Albacora Nueve		2011	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	
	Albacora Diez		2011	NGO - Greenpeace	Lloyd's	


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