

Ending Overfishing, New England



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REBUILDING FISHERIES AND FISHING COMMUNITIES

Atlantic cod, once considered among the most abundant fish in the sea, was a major factor in the discovery and settlement of North America. From the early American colonies well into the 20th century, cod was a mainstay of the New England economy and an icon of regional culture. When the cod fishery declined in the early 1990s due to decades of overfishing, thousands of men and women lost their jobs, severely affecting the region's livelihood and way of life. Today, Atlantic cod hovers at a fraction of its historic levels and continues to be overfished, causing further harm to the region's economy and marine environment.

The cod's plight is not unique in New England. The region's fisheries are among

the most depleted and poorly managed in the nation. Nine fish stocks are subject to overfishing, including all those that have been the bread and butter of the New England fishing fleet. Bycatch, the incidental capture and killing of fish and marine life, is poorly monitored and largely unregulated, further contributing to the overfishing crisis. New England's fishing problems grow worse every year because managers fail to set science-based catch limits.

The Pew Environment Group is leading a campaign to encourage the New England Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish science-based catch limits and to tighten controls on bycatch in order to end

overfishing in the region by January 2010.

New England's marine environment was once among the most productive in the world. The goal of this campaign is to restore the health and productivity of this magnificent system so that it will support healthy populations of fish and marine wildlife and, in turn, sustain more productive and sustainable fisheries and a stronger coastal economy.