

Brexit gives UK 'once in a hundred years opportunity' to restore fish and marine life

BREXIT gives the UK a “once in a hundred years opportunity” to restore fish and marine life to levels not seen since Victorian times, two of the world’s top marine biologists has said.

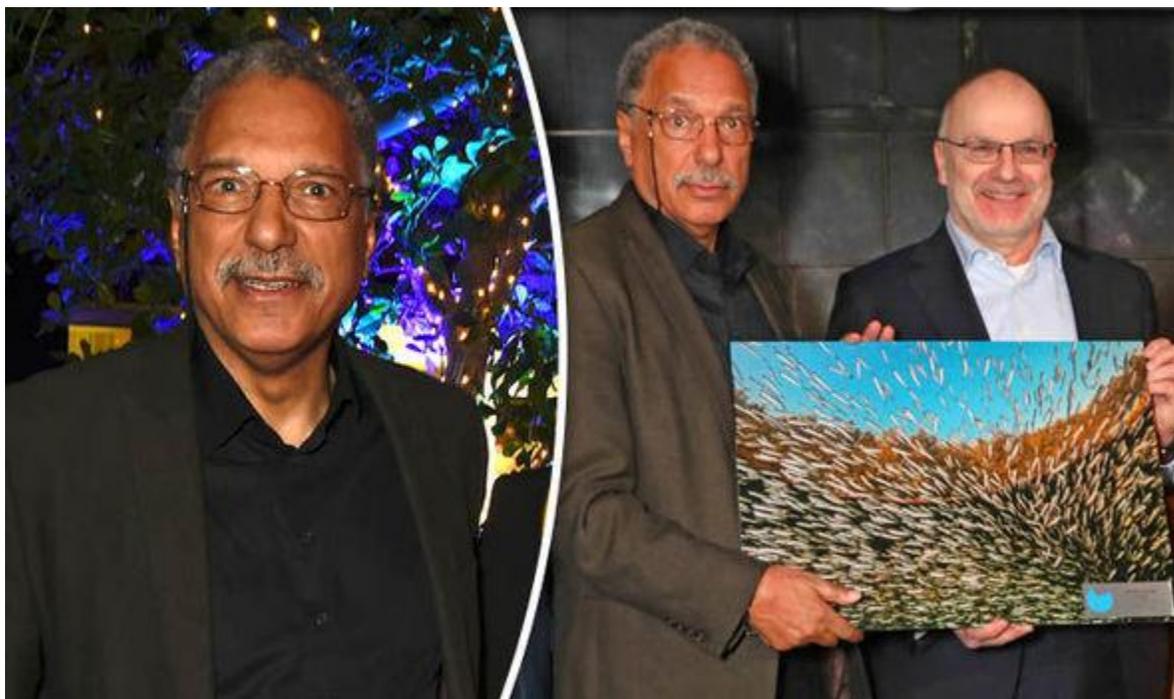
By [JOHN INGHAM](#)

PUBLISHED: 17:36, Tue, Jan 17, 2017 | UPDATED: 10:14, Thu, Jan 19, 2017

Leaving the [European Union](#) would let Britain stop having to treat its fish as a “shared resource” under [Brussels’ Common Fisheries Policy](#), said Professor Daniel Pauly and Dr Dirk Zeller from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

The UK could instead take control of its fish stocks and help rebuild them.

Under the CFP the UK shares its fisheries with other EU states.



Each nation is given quotas for each type of fish. But the two experts said [Brexit](#) would let Britain ban foreign vessels from its fishing grounds.

They also called on the UK to pass a law similar to America’s Magnusson Stevens Act which requires the rebuilding of fish stocks in an area within 10 years.

Prof Pauly said Britain had enjoyed a magnificent wealth of sea life right up to the shoreline before the steam trawler and modern fishing began to take their toll from the mid 19th century.



Prof Pauly and Dr Zeller are from the University of British Columbia in Canada

He said: “Now post-Brexit the UK has an opportunity never seen in the last 100 years to bring that back - to literally turn the clock back.

“First the UK will need to designate between 20 and 30 per cent of its own waters as Marine Reserves with no fishing of any kind allowed in them to enable stocks to rebuild.

“At the same time Britain will need to set its own new catch limits and quotas for each species in your waters instead of having them imposed from Brussels.

“Your fisheries minister’s job would be to enforce that stock recovery is enforced by law.

“Stocks would seen recover with foreign fishing vessels banned access to UK waters and rights to fish granted to boats from British ports.”

He added: “We have to get free of this assumption that fisheries are an international thing.

“It is true that European countries are relatively small compared to African countries but they have lots of stocks within their exclusive economic zone and these stocks can be managed solely by the national authorities.”

Professor Pauly spoke as he and his colleague were presented with the Science category of Boat International’s Ocean Awards, in partnership with Blue Marine Foundation for their ground-breaking research on world fish catches.

Dr. Zeller said scientists had proved that fish stocks can recover quickly with the right measures in place.

He said: “The result would soon be more fish for the consumer to eat and fishermen to catch nearer their home port which could re-generate your coastal towns.”

This comes after **Brexit secretary David Davis expressed his confidence Britain would sign “a lot” of free trade deals** with countries.

Link: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/755416/brexit-european-union-fish-marine-opportunities-britain>