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Artisanal Fishers in West Africa Outmatch Industrial Fleet in Size and Engine Power, Still Catch Less Fish

Source: Hakai Magazine/Munyaradzi Mekozi - June 20, 2017 in Politics

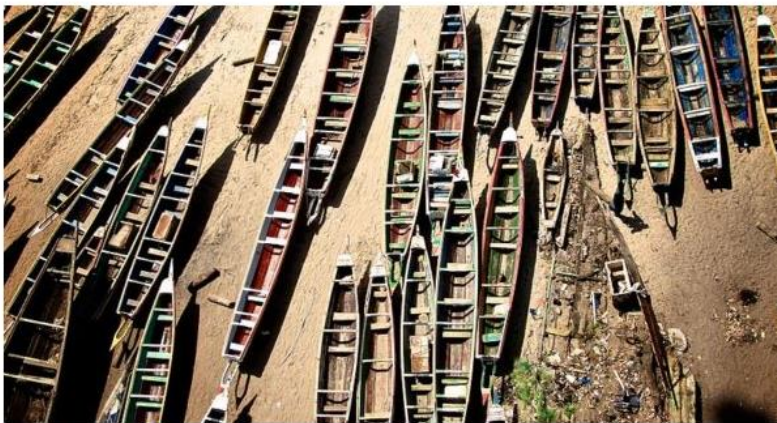


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FEATURED VIDEO

Data, the Key to Combatting...

West Africa's artisanal fishing fleet has grown in size and engine power to the point where it now dwarfs the region's industrial fleet. Yet despite a massive labor force and steadily growing horsepower, artisanal fishers still catch way less fish.

Over the past 65 years, the total artisanal fishing effort in the coastal waters from Morocco to Namibia has increased 10-fold. Thousands of people in West Africa work as artisanal fishers, providing fish for their local communities. Yet over time, and in contrast to their industrial counterparts, artisanal fishers have become less efficient. That is the finding of [a seven-year study](#) by experts with the University of British Columbia's Sea Around Us project.

The results paint a picture of West Africa's subsistence fishers as a rapidly expanding group of people who are working in increasingly difficult conditions.

The team developed a new assessment metric—a way of assessing fishing effort—that let them directly compare the successes of the artisanal and industrial fishing fleets.

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