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## Tuna study raises alarms, finds fishing increased 1,000% in 60 years

By Undercurrent News Oct 8, 2019 17:46 BST



Bluefin tuna. Credit: Europeche

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**China is hungry for seafood**

A new study by a group of 10 researchers at Canada's University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, and two other universities, reports that tuna harvesting, including for some species deemed vulnerable, has increased by 1,000% in the last 60 years, a rate that they say can't be sustained.

The study, which is to be published in the journal [Fisheries Research](#) but is available online now and was featured recently in an article published by [National Public Radio](#), reportedly involved assembling public domain datasets from all five tuna regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). The researchers, which also came from Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the University of Western

Australia, in Crawley, and the BLOOM Association, in Paris, France, looked only at larger industrial catches.

They determined that harvesters are now pulling nearly 6 million metric tons of tuna annually out of the ocean, half of which is skipjack, a common source of canned tuna. Yellowfin accounts for another quarter.

"The big surprise for me was how much [southern] bluefin tuna had declined," lead author Angie Coulter, from the University of British Columbia's Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries, is quoted as saying by *NPR*.

Southern bluefin tuna from the Indian Ocean accounted for 36% of tuna catches in the 1960s, though today it has fallen to less than 1% of the catch.

Tuna is also being taken farther from shore, found the study, which noted that industrial tuna fishing now covers between 55% and 90% of the global oceans, fueled in part by extensive government subsidies.

"[T]here continue to be instances of considerable overfishing of high-seas fish stocks, and all RFMOs have been challenged on their ability to successfully manage stocks and fisheries as well as protect non-target species impacted by fishing fleets," the researchers said in an abstract of the study.

The report also draws attention to the amount of bycatch taken in the pursuit of tuna: just under 6 million metric tons of shark were discarded between 1950 and 2016 in the Pacific Ocean alone, *NPR* observes.

Link: <https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2019/10/08/tuna-study-raises-alarms-finds-fishing-increased-1000-in-60-years/>