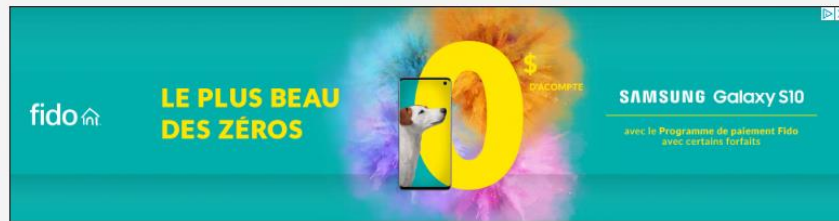


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## The Invisible Women Of Small Scale Fisheries Contribute 11% Of Global Catch

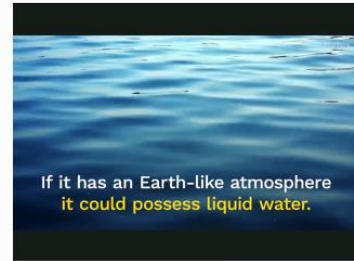


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Female freedivers called "Haenyeo" on the South Korean island of Jeju fish for subtidal species. ANDREW TRITES



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The world of fisheries is a man's domain, or so it was thought until recently. In the spirit of International Women's Day, we bring to light newly-published [research](#) that uncovers the underreported, and rarely-acknowledged contributions of female fishers around the globe. What was once considered men's work has actually involved women working undercover throughout history. With the number of women in the fisheries sector increasing, acknowledgment of their contributions will bring economic, social and cultural benefits to fishing communities.

**“Gender roles are very dynamic, and this study provides a snapshot in time”**

Dr. Sarah Harper, lead researcher

Driven by the blatant lack of research on women's role in fishing communities and the male-focused bias that plagues most fisheries data, the female-led study was conducted by resource management specialist Dr. Sarah Harper,

under the supervision of co-authors Dr. Rashid Sumaila and Dr. Daniel Pauly and in collaboration with the *Sea Around Us* initiative. What they found was that over 2 million women participate in nearshore coastal fisheries worldwide, contributing 11% of the global catch from small-scale fisheries (and 12% of the value of these fisheries). Most of these fisherwomen live in Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Harper explains that the data was gathered from a variety of sources, “from national databases to local experts, to peer-reviewed and newspaper articles, in order to estimate how much women are catching in all countries and regions”. However, despite their significant contributions, fisherwomen are almost never credited. In fact, women are strangely omitted altogether, erasing them from the data that informs management, policy, funding and programming.



Fisherwoman catches dinner at the water's edge in Turkey. AYLIN ULMAN





A female freediver (Haenyeo) hauls her catch in from a long day of diving and fishing on the South ... [+]

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The research team sought to analyze current fisheries research and compile baseline data to address the a large gap in knowledge, with the goal of tearing apart and “reconstructing fisheries catches with a more comprehensive picture of fishing”. The current gaps in the data bring with them inherent ambiguity. Harper doesn’t try to conceal this uncertainty, and rather seeks to highlight it. “You have to start somewhere to compile a global data set,” she says “the data are highly uncertain because I wasn’t out collecting primary data, I was relying on secondary sources,” which she explains adds a certain level of guesswork right off the bat. While she did attempt to accurately compensate for the

variances in the data, she says that there is room for improvement and hopes to see more standardized data on gender in fisheries in the future.

“From catching the fish up until the time it is consumed, women are involved in every aspect of that process,” Harper says. As cultural norms and economic conditions have changed, women are going out on boats more, owning their own boats and maybe hiring a crew. “Gender roles are very dynamic, and this study provides a snapshot in time”

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Link: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ariellasimke/2020/03/08/the-invisible-women-of-small-scale-fisheries-contribute-11-of-global-catch/#2db840b7445e>