JOACHIM MÜLLER

Overfishing Cost New England Fishermen at Least $149 Million in 2009

Because of decades of overfishing—catching fish faster than they can reproduce—in 2009, commercial fishermen in New England who targeted species such as cod, flounder, halibut and other bottom-dwelling "groundfish" **lost at least $149 million and realized just 21 percent of potential revenues**. This additional income could have been earned if fish populations had been at healthy levels. New analysis is discussed in a report authored by Ecotrust, one of the leading providers of marine social and economic research.
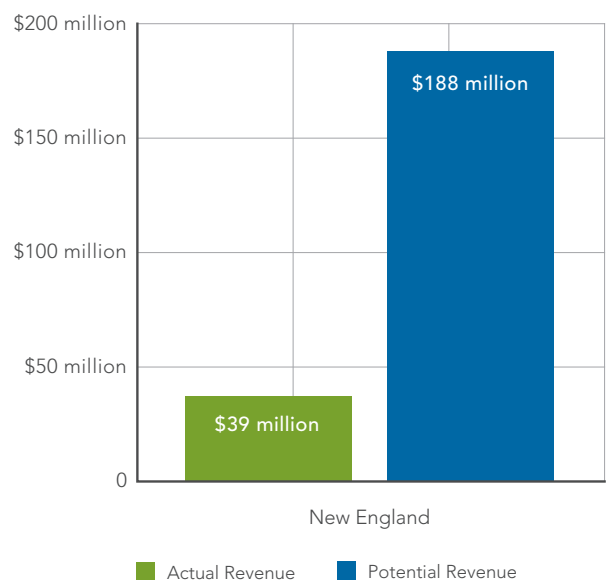
President George W. Bush recognized the costly legacy of overfishing in 2006 when he signed amendments to strengthen the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) with bipartisan requirements to establish science-based catch limits to end overfishing and rebuild depleted fish populations. **Congress should uphold the MSA** so that we can restore our nation's fish populations and help our economy by putting those dollars back into fishermen's wallets and our coastal communities.

"We caught the big ones, and we caught the little ones. And then it all collapsed."

TED AMES
retired fisherman, historian
Stonington, Maine

The Hidden Cost of Overfishing to Commercial Fishermen: A 2009 Snapshot of Lost Revenues

This report examines the impact of chronic overfishing by calculating the earnings lost by commercial fishermen due to declines in fish populations. The Pew Environment Group commissioned Ecotrust, one of the leading providers of marine social and economic research, to analyze this problem.

$200 million
$150 million
$100 million
$50 million
0

$188 million

$39 million

New England

■ Actual Revenue   ■ Potential Revenue

The calculated losses represent just a small fraction of the total cost of overfishing. Although not addressed in the study, full costs extend to shoreside businesses that support the commercial fishing industry, recreational fishermen and coastal communities.

The report concludes that the failure to conserve the fish populations on which fishermen and the seafood economy depend will perpetuate future losses. But implementing firm catch limits, based on science, that end and prevent overfishing, will benefit fishermen for generations.

Congress must safeguard the future of our nation's seafood providers to restore an abundance of fish in our coastal waters. To quickly end overfishing, Congress must stick with the long-term gains that the MSA is already providing. Protecting our nation's fish populations today will lead to increased and continued profits for years to come.

Georges Bank Cod Spawning Population

(metric tons of fish)

Legend:
- Healthy Population Level*
- Overfished Level*
- Estimated Population Size

Old-timers in New England's commercial cod fishery don't want us to forget how we got here. They remember how different the fishing was just a few decades ago. Hear their tales in this short video and read their stories as they reminisce about the great Atlantic cod.

But they have hope. As one "old salt," retired fisherman Fred Bennett concludes: "I really think that science needs to take over. We need to start listening to the science. If we can send somebody to the moon, we sure as hell can fix this fishery."

FULL REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

http://www.pewenvironment.org/costofoverfishing

The following people are available for comment:

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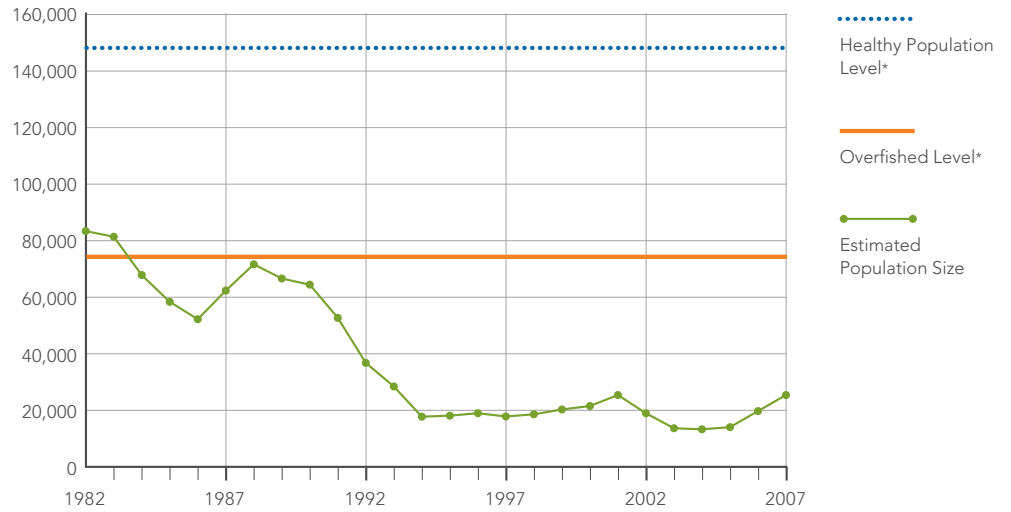508-945-9001

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THE PEW ENVIRONMENT GROUP

CONSERVING NEW ENGLAND FISH

Our campaign works to create sustainable fishing in New England for the seafood we love to eat, such as cod. We take guidance from science and fishermen to meet our shared goals of preventing overfishing and protecting fishermen's livelihoods while fish populations rebuild. Visit www.PewEnvironment.org/Cod to learn more. 617-728-0300 or northeastfish@pewtrusts.org

www.PewEnvironment.org/Cod

*Northeast Fisheries Science Center. 2008. Assessment of 19 Northeast Groundfish Stocks through 2007: Report of the 3rd Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM III), Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole, Mass., Aug. 4-8, 2008. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries, Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document. 08-15. www.nefsc.noaa.gov/publications/crd/crd0815/crd0815.pdf.