

The Magnuson-Stevens amendment I want under the Christmas tree

Nils E. Stolpe/FishNet USA

© 2018 Nils E. Stolpe

February 23, 2018

Please do not reproduce or redistribute any or all of this issue of FishNet USA without the express permission of the author. To be removed from this distribution list, please reply to this email with "remove" in the subject line. A printable version is available at http://www.fishnet-usa.com/Overfished_Depleted.pdf. ADDRESS CHANGE - If you have an email address for FishNet-USA other than NilsStolpe@FishNet-USA.com in your address book, please change it.

OVERFISHING! This has become one of the oceans branch of the doom and gloom prognosticator's (aka Environmental Non Governmental Organizations or ENGOS) principal calls for alms. To wit, they have collectively raked in hundreds of millions of dollars from big business-supported foundations and trusting members of the public to persecute (generally commercial) fishermen who they preach are the cause of "overfishing," the major threat to the sanctity of the oceans. (I'll note here that the Pew "Charitable" Trusts was the multibillion dollar foundation that initiated the war on fishermen. The Trusts were and are controlled by the family of the founder of Sun Oil/Sunoco, Joseph Pew. Oceana, which has received \$63 million from the Pew Trusts, is the ENGO that was among the first to persecute traditional fishermen. Oceana was spawned by Earthjustice, which has received at least \$23 million from Pew. Pew has also funded various commercial fishing groups to the tune of millions of dollars to support various Pew priorities (see <https://www.fishingnj.org/netusa16.htm> and <https://www.fishingnj.org/netusa17.htm> for some early history of Pew's entry into fishing. Other industry-influenced mega-foundations have followed in Pew's footsteps – I've listed the foundations and their level of funding of ENGOS that were and are involved in destroying the traditional domestic fishing industry up until 2010 at <http://www.fishtruth.net/ENGO%20SPENDING.htm>).

Obviously overfishing means catching too many fish, catching so many that a population of fish can't replace itself (a population that is replacing itself is "sustainable").

But in actual fact there are a myriad of reasons why a stock of fish might not be able to replace itself, with overfishing being only one of these reasons. Changing ocean temperatures, oceanic/climatic oscillations (think El Niño and La Niña or the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation), the proliferation of electromagnetic fields from undersea electrical or data transmission cables, un- or inadequately controlled coastal development, natural or anthropogenic pollution, or any number of other factors, singularly or in combination, might well be preventing particular fish stocks from being capable of sustaining themselves. But adequate research on the effects of these other factors isn't being done because now all the blame falls on "overfishing."

Chances are that those ENGOS that have raised so many millions of dollars, gotten a tremendous amount of media attention, and convinced a significant part of both the national and international seafood markets that sustainable harvesting of fish and shellfish is only possible by controlling fishing would rather that the other factors affecting seafood sustainability be kept far beneath the public's and the pol's attention threshold. Ditto for the mega-industries that support them and are often responsible for non-fishing factors that negatively impact seafood sustainability. It's to their vast benefit to keep the focus on "overfishing," because then it isn't on what they're doing.

When the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the federal legislation that controls just about all of the aspects of fishing in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone was originally written in 1975-76 it contained the terms "overfishing" or "overfished" a total of seven times.

When the Act was reauthorized in 1996 as the Sustainable Fisheries Act, thanks to ENGO pressure "overfishing" or "overfished" were used 36 times. From the Definitions section "*The terms 'overfishing' and 'overfished' mean a rate or level of fishing mortality that jeopardizes the capacity of a fishery to produce the maximum sustainable yield on a continuing basis.*"

Thanks to the efforts of the ENGOs, the corporations (or the corporate heirs) that control them through massive donations to a network of “charitable” foundations and a few fishermen’s organizations that they fund, “overfishing” was well on its way to becoming the primary sin being committed on the 72% of the Earth that is covered by salt water.

This purposeful misuse of the term “overfishing” has been one of the most subtle and most effective weapons in the anti-fishing activists’ arsenal.

In order to change this, to insure that non-fishing factors that negatively impact fish stocks are properly identified, in Congressman Don Young’s H.R. 200, **the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act**, fish and shellfish stocks whose sustainability is being threatened by fishing will still be identified as overfished but those whose sustainability is threatened by non-fishing factors will be labelled as depleted.

This will have the joint benefits of allowing (if possible) measures to be taken that will address those non-fishing factors and putting the onus of overfishing only on those fisheries that are actually being threatened by overfishing, rather than on every fishery in which there aren’t enough fish regardless of the reason.

Of course, like every other attempt to remove unnecessary and ineffectual regulatory burdens from fishermen, the anti-fishing ENGOs, the fishing organizations they support, and the foundations that support them object to this change, though there’s no reason involving the health of our fish stocks that they should. What such a change would do, however, is start directing attention to those non-fishing factors that threaten our fish stocks that shouldn’t be allowed to – surely something that will be opposed in any way possible by those foundation-supporting industries seeking the unconstrained control of the world’s oceans and who has access to them.

Fishermen have been unjustly bearing the responsibility for unsustainable fisheries, when the reason for that unsustainability has nothing to do with fishing for far too long and Congressman Young’s amendment will effectively end this anti-fishing ENGO engineered charade. The motivation of any group, organization or individual opposing this must be questioned, and questioned loudly and persistently.

If you aren’t in regular contact with your Senators or Congresswoman/Congressman, this would be a great time to start. Let them know that this is a “mistake” whose correction in Magnuson is critical to the future of fishing in U.S. waters.

I can be reached by replying to this email or at 386 409 0675.