

Activity: Plenty of fish?

Too many fish are being taken out of the ocean. This simple practical activity shows pupils how quickly fish stocks collapse when they are overfished.

You will need:

- For each pupil: a spoon, pot, [Fishing catch sheet](#)
- For each group of six: a bowl or tub containing 30 dried peas, 30 popcorn kernels, 30 beads. (You can use any items as long as they're sufficiently different in size)
- Extra peas, kernels and beads for refills. There are 2 refills; max 60 of each type would be needed for each group if pupils did not catch any fish.

What to do

1. Divide pupils into groups of up to 6 and give each group a bowl of peas, kernels and beads. Explain:
 - dried peas represent cod
 - popcorn kernels are porpoise
 - beads are green turtles.
2. Give each pupil a spoon (net) and pot (boat) and tell them they are going fishing for cod. They will be allowed to fish 3 times, for 20 seconds each time.
3. The aim is to use the spoon to catch as many cod as possible. Pupils should try to avoid porpoise and turtles, but if they catch any, they should put them in the pot. The pupil who catches the most cod will be the winner. The group that catches the most cod will also win.
4. Fish for 20 seconds. Then ask pupils to record what they catch on the [Fishing catch sheet](#).



90%
of world
fish stocks
are fully
or over-
exploited
from
fishing

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What to do (continued)

5. While pupils are recording their catch, replenish the fish stocks by adding one new pea, kernel or bead for each one remaining in the bowl. Where pupils do not have any cod left, ask if they would like to release some to the water (before they record their catch).
6. Repeat the activity two more times.
7. When the fishing is finished, ask pupils and groups to calculate their overall totals of cod caught. What fishing strategy did the group and pupil who made the most cod use? How would pupils act differently if they were to do the activity again? What did pupils think about how quickly the number of cod could decrease?
8. Talk about how many porpoise and turtles were caught. These are often caught in the equipment of boats fishing for cod. Pupils were fishing carefully, trying not to catch these animals. What would happen if you were fishing with a large net?
9. Reflect on collective responsibility: how did the actions of one fisher affect the whole group? Did any group work together and how did that affect their totals? How many fish did the winning team have left in the ocean? What would this mean for their next fishing trip? Could fishers be rewarded for leaving fish in the sea for future generations?

Sustainable fishing

Over 1 billion people around the world depend on seafood as their main source of protein. For years, too much has been taken out of the sea. Sustainable fishing practices allow species to be taken at a volume and in ways that allow the marine environment to grow and thrive.

For those who choose to eat seafood, it's important that they choose to eat sustainably farmed or caught fish. Our [Good Fish Guide](#) rates the sustainability of seafood, so you can stop eating red rated and only eat green. Ecolabels from organisations like the Marine Stewardship Council also highlight sustainably-sourced fish.

When we choose sustainable seafood, it encourages supermarkets and restaurants to demand it from their suppliers, in turn encouraging them to adopt these practices.

Fishing catch

Name: _____



Cod



Porpoise



Turtles

Catch 1

	Cod	Porpoise	Turtles
Number caught			

Catch 2

	Cod	Porpoise	Turtles
Number caught			

Catch 3

	Cod	Porpoise	Turtles
Number caught			

Overall

	Cod	Porpoise	Turtles
Total caught			
Total left in bowl			