

Global Fishing Watch welcomes international partnerships to enhance ocean management

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Global Fishing Watch, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing ocean governance through transparency of human activity at sea, has announced three pioneering collaborations with Greece, Panama and the West African Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) in a bid to harness technology and data-driven solutions for enhanced transparency, improved fisheries management and greater ocean sustainability.

The partnerships, unveiled at the 9th Our Ocean Conference held in Athens, Greece, will leverage open data to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, promote sustainable fisheries management and enable marine protection through deepened engagement with governmental bodies spanning three continents. In addition, they will provide Global Fishing Watch the opportunity to highlight transparency as a critical marine management tool and advance policy reforms regarding the adoption of vessel tracking methods like automatic identification systems (AIS) and vessel monitoring systems (VMS), as well as regional data sharing practices.

"Today's announcements mark a milestone in our collaborative efforts to mobilize open data and technology in the fight against illegal fishing and toward improved global fisheries management," said Tony Long, chief executive officer of Global Fishing Watch. "More importantly, our expanding network of partnerships shows that governments and multilateral institutions are increasingly recognizing the role Global Fishing Watch can play in achieving better and more transparent ocean governance."

“Collaborative partnerships, political will and open data can drive tangible impact and help deliver lasting results for a sustainable ocean future for all,” • **Mr. Long added.**

Leveraging Technology for Ocean Action

Presented at an official conference side event co-hosted by Greece, the Athanasios C. Laskaridis Charitable Foundation and Global Fishing Watch, the partnership with Greece commits authorities to utilizing Global Fishing Watch’s [platform](#), which provides visualizations and analysis of fishing activity, for critical support in bolstering the country’s marine protection efforts.

*“Greece commits to establishing a scientific monitoring and surveillance system for all its marine protected areas that will be supported with advanced monitoring techniques and digital tools, such as remote sensing and automatic communication with sea vessels,” • **Dr. Petros Varelidis, Secretary-General for Natural Environment and Waters of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, confirmed.** “The support of Global Fishing Watch and the Athanasios C. Laskaridis Charitable Foundation will enable us to monitor fishing activity in near real-time” •*

A significant step forward against IUU fishing

The Our Ocean Conference also welcomed a new partnership between Global Fishing Watch and the seven West African SRFC Member States comprising Cabo Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Through the new three-year agreement with SRFC, Global Fishing Watch will support Member States with analysis and generated insights to inform targeted monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) actions, bolstering countries’ abilities to manage activity in their waters and safeguard livelihoods and regional economic and environmental ecosystems.

The 5,500 kilometer coastline of West Africa is home to some of the most diverse fisheries in the world and maritime activity plays a key role across the region. Indeed, [fisheries and aquaculture directly contribute US\\$24 billion to the African economy](#), with the demand for fish expected to increase by 30 percent by 2030. Inadequate monitoring and enforcement, however, have led to rampant IUU fishing, [with nearly 40 percent of fish caught illegally](#), resulting in substantial economic losses and environmental degradation.

*“The collaboration with Global Fishing Watch represents a significant step forward in the fight against illegal fishing in West Africa,” said **Dr. Khallahi Brahim, Permanent Secretary of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission** “By joining forces, Global Fishing Watch and the SRFC can help transform fisheries governance, protect marine resources and secure the livelihoods of millions of people dependent on the fishing industry.” •*

The new partnership will work to ensure that SRFC Member States are fully equipped for better cooperation, monitoring and compliance, and also help establish cross-cutting initiatives with key stakeholders in ocean governance. The collaboration will pave the way for policy reforms and seek to establish AIS usage and data sharing as central pillars of SRFC Member States’ governance practices. It will also support government agencies in developing and retaining capacity to harness data and technology to strengthen management, including MCS, enforcement and marine protection.

Charting a new era of ocean governance

Global Fishing Watch’s activity on the margins of the Our Ocean Conference also saw the renewal of an ongoing collaboration with the Government of Panama, [first launched in 2019](#), aimed at building an improved, collaborative framework for data-sharing and policy development.

The updated agreement reflects a deepened relationship between the two parties and a growing commitment to fisheries transparency. Supplementing the VMS data of its vast international fleet, which has been visible on the Global Fishing Watch map since October 2019, Panama will now share vessel data from its list of [international licenses](#), including fishing licenses, areas of operation and information related to fishing support vessels. Over the next five years, Global Fishing Watch will also provide technical and data-driven assessments for the Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama to help inform national policies and regulations related to fisheries management.

*“We are pleased to announce the renewal of the memorandum of understanding with Global Fishing Watch in our tireless fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,” • said **Hamed Tuñn, General Administrator, Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama.** “Our strengthened alliance reflects the continued commitment of both parties to protecting our oceans and preserving their biodiversity. Together, we will continue to use innovative technology and collaborative strategies to ensure the sustainability of our valuable marine resources” •*

“Now, more than ever, the global community must rally behind landmark initiatives to protect our ocean, combat harmful practices, and achieve ambitious conservation targets such as safeguarding at least 30 percent of the ocean by 2030” •

Mr. Long concluded. *“Achieving these critical commitments will be virtually impossible without Global Fishing Watch’s innovative ocean monitoring technology and expertise.”*