

Human dimensions of illegal fishing: behavioural insights for compliance and deterrence (MPhil project)

Start date and duration: January 2022 (2 years)

Institution and funding: This position will be primarily based at Ocean University (Sri Lanka), with support from Oceanswell (Sri Lanka), NOVA University (Portugal) and the Zoological Society of London (UK). This is a fully funded position with a monthly stipend, and travel and expenses paid.

Supervisory team:

- Prof. M.F.M. Fairoz (Ocean University, Sri Lanka)
- Dr. Asha de Vos (Oceanswell, Sri Lanka and the University of Western Australia)
- Dr. Ana Nuno (NOVA Universidad Lisboa, Portugal)
- Dr. Claire Collins (ZSL and University of Exeter, UK)

Context & Background: Illegal fishing threatens fish populations and marine habitats, affecting the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities worldwide. It also undermines conservation and management in protected areas across the Indian Ocean, where abundant fish populations attract Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activity. To manage this, it is key to understand the social context of non-compliance. Yet, we rarely use insights on social aspects of IUU to inform and test approaches in policy and conservation practices.

To address IUU worldwide, we need to understand human behaviour, drivers and deterrence, as well as facilitating coordination among key stakeholders across countries. In this project, we will gain behavioural insights on the fishers' non-compliance and deterrence effects. We will consider key priorities and opportunities for tackling IUU within the Sri Lankan fleet, including the role of surveillance technologies across the fishing fleet.

To achieve this aim social science tools, such as semi-structured interviews, will be used to gather data directly from fishers and other key stakeholders. You will receive training in how these tools can be used to collect data on sensitive issues to gather an accurate and broad understanding of human dimensions of these issues. Data will be collected across several sites in Sri Lanka to i) explore knowledge and awareness of enforcement; ii) determine how fishers' behaviour is influenced by surveillance, detection and enforcement; iii) and relate information on fisher social characteristics, e.g. age and time spent fishing, to perception of, and willingness to engage in, risk-taking activities. This research will be designed and implemented in collaboration with Oceanswell (Sri Lanka), ZSL (UK) and NOVA University (Portugal).

Training and funding: This project will provide comprehensive training in social science methods, and an opportunity to attend a training course (in Sri Lanka) on social sciences in marine conservation.

The successful applicant will be fully funded to undertake their research by a monthly stipend and all travel expenses will be covered.

In addition to participation in international events (e.g. scientific conference), a one-month stay at the Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences at NOVA in Portugal is planned so that the student can participate in seminars, establish links with peers and develop research protocols with close support of international supervisors. In addition, there will be close links with an Indian PhD student also encompassed under this project, with potential for travel to India.

This project has the potential to lead to a student-led peer reviewed publication.

Application specification: This opportunity will suit a Sri Lankan student interested in building experience using social science approaches/methods to address natural resource management and conservation issues in applied settings. We're looking for a motivated student that is keen to learn about new tools and apply them in a culturally sensitive manner in fishing communities. This position would suit a candidate with the following skills and experience:

- Comfortable with travel (both national and international) and ability to work independently
- Ability to integrate with people of different backgrounds and cultures
- Skilled and willing to engage with a broad variety of stakeholders (e.g. fishers, community leaders, government representatives)
- Good communication skills
- Experience with using social science tools (e.g. surveys)
- Knowledge of fisheries and marine conservation issues, including a relevant BSc qualification (e.g. Fisheries Science, Biology) from a recognised university
- Ability to write a range of different outputs, including peer-reviewed publication and reports
- Fluency and ability to work in English and Sinhalese and/or Tamil
- Good English language writing skills

How to apply:

Please send the following documents for the attention of Prof. MFM Fairoz fairoz@ocu.ac.lk and Dr. Asha de Vos info@oceanswell.org. Please save each document as follows;

'Surname_Coverletter', 'Surname_Example', 'Surname_CV'. For example 'DeVos_Coverletter' etc.

Ensure the subject line of application email states your SurnameFirstname_MPhilFisheries. For example DeVosAsha_MPhilFisheries

- Cover letter explaining your suitability for the role based on the listed skills and experience above
- Example of work in English (e.g. BSc thesis, publication)
- Curriculum vitae (2 pages)
- Two letters of recommendation written by academic referees specifically highlighting the student's suitability for this MPhil project, to be sent directly to Prof. Fairoz and Dr. de Vos on or before the application deadline. Ensuring the recommendation letters arrive in a timely manner is the responsibility of the applicant.

The deadline for applications is 12th December 2021, following which successful candidates will be invited for a short interview in the following weeks. Late applications will not be considered.

Useful references stemming from this project:

Collins, C., Nuno, A., Benaragama, A., Broderick, A., Wijesundara, I., Wijetunge, D., & Letessier, T. B. (2021). Ocean-scale footprint of a highly mobile fishing fleet: Social-ecological drivers of fleet behaviour and evidence of illegal fishing. *People and Nature*.

Moro, M., Fischer, A., Czajkowski, M., Brennan, D., Lowassa, A., Naiman, L.C. & Hanley, N. (2013). An investigation using the choice experiment method into options for reducing illegal bushmeat hunting in western Serengeti. *Conserv. Lett.*, 6.

Project partners:

