



Global High Seas Marine Preserve
savingoceans.org

White Paper: A Five-Year Global Moratorium on Industrial Commercial Fishing and a Ban on Ocean Garbage Dumping

Prepared by the Global High Seas Marine Preserve, a U.S. non-profit for
Presentation to the United Nations

Executive Summary

The world's oceans are approaching ecological collapse due to overfishing, habitat degradation, and pollution. Industrial commercial fishing has removed over 90% of large fish species in many regions, while plastic and chemical waste continue to poison marine ecosystems. A coordinated **five-year global moratorium on industrial commercial fishing**, paired with a **comprehensive international ban on dumping garbage into the ocean**, would allow marine ecosystems to recover, protect biodiversity, restore fish stocks, reduce carbon emissions, and safeguard global food security.

This white paper outlines the scientific basis, ecological urgency, expected benefits, and implementation framework for such a moratorium. It includes globally recognized data sources and research findings to support international policy action.

1. Introduction

Oceans regulate Earth's climate, generate half of the planet's oxygen, and provide essential food and livelihood for billions of people. However, industrial fishing and ocean pollution have critically weakened marine ecosystems. Scientific evidence shows that temporary moratoria in damaged ecosystems can produce rapid and powerful recoveries—often within a single reproductive cycle for smaller species, and progressively for larger predators.

A United Nations–led global moratorium would represent one of the most effective and scalable climate and biodiversity strategies available.

2. The State of the Oceans: An Ecological Emergency

2.1 Overfishing

- Over **one-third of global fish stocks** are overexploited (FAO, 2022).
- Industrial fleets extract **80–90 million tons** of fish annually.
- Populations of large predatory fish such as tuna, sharks, and cod have declined by **70–90%** in many regions (Myers & Worm, Nature, 2003).

2.2 Impact of Industrial Fishing

- **Trawling** destroys seafloor habitats that take centuries to recover.
- **Bycatch** kills millions of sharks, dolphins, sea turtles, and seabirds each year.
- **Food-web collapse** occurs when prey species are depleted faster than predators can adapt.

2.3 Pollution from Ocean Dumping

- Over **11 million tons of plastic** enter the oceans each year (UNEP, 2021).
- Chemical runoff and waste dumping create over **500 dead zones** worldwide.
- Microplastics have been found in human blood, placentas, and major organs.

3. Rationale for a Five-Year Moratorium

A five-year global moratorium on industrial fishing would:

3.1 Restore Fish Stocks

- Small fish rebound quickly (1–3 years) when pressure is removed.
- Increased prey biomass accelerates recovery of large predators such as tuna, swordfish, and sharks.
- Marine Protected Areas show **300% increases in biomass** within 5 years (Lester et al., PNAS, 2009).

3.2 Rebuild Ecosystem Resilience

- Marine food webs can re-stabilize once predation patterns normalize.
- Recovered fish populations strengthen global biodiversity corridors.

3.3 Strengthen Climate Protection

- Healthy oceans absorb more carbon.
- Trawling releases **1 gigaton of CO₂ annually**—more than all global aviation (Sala et al., Nature, 2021).

3.4 Support Long-Term Food Security

- Moratoria provide long-term yield increases once fisheries reopen.
- Countries that implemented temporary bans (e.g., Indonesia, Namibia, New Zealand) saw dramatic recovery in fish stocks and profits.

4. Ban on Garbage Dumping in the Oceans

4.1 Scope of the Ban

The ban would prohibit: - Plastic waste dumping - Industrial chemical waste discharge - Sewage sludge dumping - Military dumping of vessels or equipment

4.2 Benefits

- Immediate reduction in plastic ingestion by marine species
- Recovery of coral reefs and seagrass beds
- Reduction of toxins entering global food chains
- Improved human health outcomes

4.3 Enforcement Mechanisms

- UN Maritime Monitoring Network
- Satellite tracking of vessels
- International penalties tied to trade agreements

5. Implementation Framework

5.1 International Legal Mechanisms

- Amendments to the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**
- Creation of a **Global Marine Recovery Treaty (GMRT)**
- Cooperation with IMO, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO, and regional fisheries bodies

5.2 Economic Transition Pathways

- Subsidy redirection from industrial fleets to small-scale sustainable fisheries
- Workforce retraining programs for fishing communities
- Expansion of aquaculture with strict environmental standards

5.3 Monitoring and Compliance

- Global satellite vessel tracking (AIS)
- Drones and unmanned ocean drones (e.g., Saildrones)
- Randomized maritime inspections
- International reporting requirements

6. Expected Outcomes After Five Years

By Year 5, research predicts: - **50–200% increase** in small fish populations - **Significant rebound** of larger predators - **Reduced ocean acidification** from improved biological carbon pumps - **Collapse reversal** in several overfished ecosystems (e.g., Mediterranean, Caribbean) - **Improved food security** and long-term fishery profitability

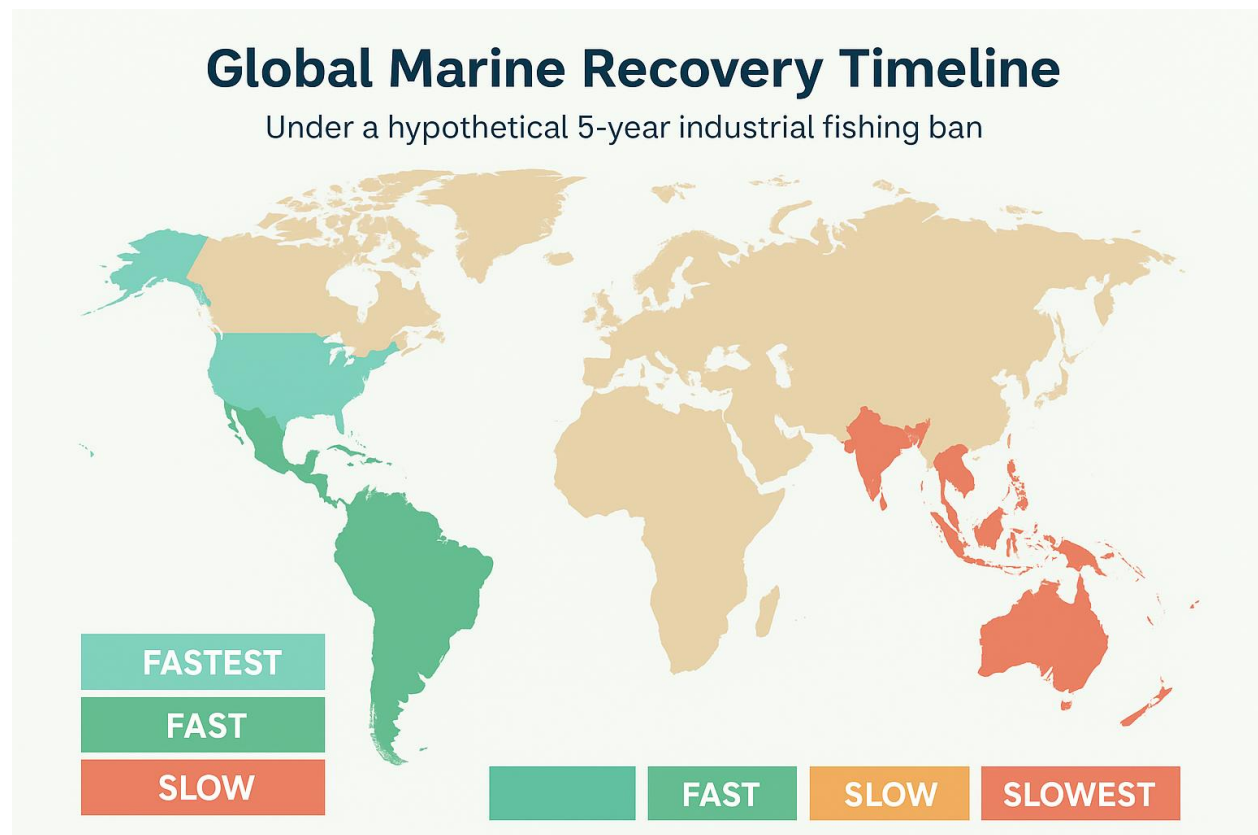
7. Policy Recommendations

1. Adopt a five-year global moratorium on industrial commercial fishing.
2. Implement a strict international ban on dumping waste into oceans.
3. Provide economic support to coastal nations dependent on industrial fleets.
4. Expand global marine monitoring technologies.
5. Prioritize indigenous and small-scale sustainable fisheries.
6. Fund scientific research centers to track ecosystem recovery.
7. Create an international enforcement coalition under UN leadership.

8. Conclusion

A temporary, globally coordinated moratorium paired with an ocean dumping ban represents a powerful intervention to reverse decades of marine degradation. It is scientifically grounded, economically beneficial, ecologically urgent, and deeply aligned with the United Nations' mission to promote peace, human health, and planetary sustainability. The next decade is critical—without decisive action, marine ecosystems may reach irreversible tipping points.

The world's oceans can recover. We simply must give them the chance.



References (Selected)

- FAO. *State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA)*, 2022.

- Myers, R. & Worm, B. "Rapid worldwide depletion of predatory fish communities." *Nature*, 2003.
 - UNEP. *From Pollution to Solution: A Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution*, 2021.
 - Sala, E. et al. "Protecting the global ocean for biodiversity, food and climate." *Nature*, 2021.
 - Lester, S.E. et al. "Biological effects within no-take marine reserves: a global synthesis." *PNAS*, 2009.
 - IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2019.
-

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Danny Quintana
President
Global High Seas Marine Preserve
dannyquintanawriter@gmail.com