

# New research partnership to investigate illegal fishing in the North Pacific Ocean

**Tokyo, Japan. 13 September 2018** - The Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA) has entered into a formal collaboration with the global non-profit organisation, Global Fishing Watch, and the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) at the University of Wollongong to investigate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and strengthen transparency and governance of fisheries within the region.

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), initiated on 3rd September 2018, the partners intend to share relevant open public data and analytical methodologies, including vessel movement data, catch data and satellite imagery; collaborate on relevant research activities, and publish research outcomes to advance international understanding on IUU fishing and its impacts.

*“The impact of IUU fishing on resources is significant. We must assess it through this partnership.”* said FRA’s President, Masanori Miyahara.

Through the 3-year collaboration, the partners intend to generate a much clearer picture of fishing activity in the Pacific, including the pattern of transshipment activity, and for the findings to be used to inform decision-making with the regional fisheries management organisations.

*“Fisheries are a critically important global resource for food security, livelihoods, employment and development. This collaboration will bring together technology, research and policy expertise to ultimately strengthen fisheries governance, build transparency and support a sustainable future for the Pacific region’s fisheries.”* said Associate Professor Quentin Hanich, head of the ANCORS Fisheries Governance Program at the University of Wollongong.

The partners also intend to analyse night time satellite imagery that picks up the location and activity of brightly lit vessels operating at night in the Pacific Ocean. Squid jigging, for example, most often takes place at night with bright overhead lights to attract the squid. They will also study transshipment operations in the purse seine and 'night light' fishing fleets in the Pacific.

Fishing boats and refrigerated cargo vessels meet at sea in order to transfer seafood, crew, fuel or supplies. Known as transshipment, the practice enables fishing boats to remain at sea fishing for months to years at a time while still getting their catch to market.

*“This is a significant partnership, initiated by the FRA. By sharing skill-sets, using cutting edge technology and open data, we can better understand what is happening in waters important to Japan and to more sustainable fisheries in the region.”* said Global Fishing Watch’s CEO, Tony Long.

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**Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency (FRA)** is a public organisation, established on April 1, 2016 through a merger of the Fisheries Research Agency (originated from 9 institutes of Fisheries Agency of Japan, Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries since 1949) and the National Fisheries University. The FRA aims to maximize research and development (R&D) outcomes as the only comprehensive fisheries R&D organization in Japan. The FRA is contributing to the revival of Japan as a nation of fisheries by maximizing R&D outcomes.

**The Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) at the University of Wollongong** is a globally recognised academic centre of excellence for ocean governance and marine resource security. We bring together teams of specialist lawyers, political scientists and international relations experts, geographers, marine biologists and social scientists to design, innovate and integrate ocean law, maritime management and marine policy. We provide real-world research outcomes that assist decision makers and enhance the quality of policy-making. Our expertise and capacity enables us to employ a multi-disciplinary approach to complex issues and bring to the subject a range of specialised perspectives.

**Global Fishing Watch (GFW)** is an international non-profit organisation committed to advancing the sustainability of our oceans through increased transparency. By harnessing cutting edge technology, our mapping platform allows anyone to view or download data and investigate global fishing activity in near real-time, for free. GFW was founded in 2015 through a collaboration between Oceana, SkyTruth and Google. Our work is made possible thanks to the support of our [funding partners and technology and data providers](#). [www.globalfishingwatch.org](http://www.globalfishingwatch.org)