

This is an essay written by Dr, Malia Chow's nephew, who wrote it 2 years ago for an English class at Wallawa Middle School. He supports the issues of protecting our oceans and wanted to share this.

**The Negative Consequences of Over Fishing in
Our Oceans**

By: Austin Nagao
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I never imagined that we could run out of fish in our ocean waters. When I look at how large our oceans are, it is hard to believe that maybe one day there would be no fish left for the stores, restaurants, or at our tables for dinner. Over fishing has become a real problem. Not only here in Hawaii, but it is a global problem that we should all be aware of.

A report that was published by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (SOPIA), has reported that 52% of fish stocks are fully exploited. This means that over half of our fish supply could disappear if we do not start acting on this problem soon. And even more disturbing, is that 25% of the world's fish stocks is already gone. Around the world, 90% of large predatory fish stocks are also already gone. I feel that this is really sad because if we took the time to care this would not be happening. This is

As a result of the over fishing problem, it has caused two other serious problems. The first problem is that our ecosystems are being lost. The entire ecological environment in our oceans is at risk of falling apart because of the stress of losing so much fish. I believe that if the ecosystems do fall apart then many other types of marine animals will also be affected because their food source will begin to disappear, then we will not only be losing our fish, but other sea animals too. The second problem is the risk of all of us losing a valuable food source. Many people, including my aunty, depend on the ocean for their source of protein. Many people depend on the ocean for their jobs too, and without this resource, it would create a huge financial loss. It has been reported that every year 16 billion pounds of fish are wasted by commercial fishing

industries. The global fleet catches 250% more fish than they need to catch, and more than what the ocean can naturally produce.

One of the main causes of the problem is mismanagement. No one thought about the fish supply running out and for years people just kept on fishing. My uncle tells me stories about how easy it was to catch near shore reef fish when he was my age. He said there was so much fish before. Now when he takes me fishing we hardly ever catch a fish. It makes me feel frustrated.

We all need to become more aware of this problem. We need to care enough to help educate others and find ways to stop over fishing. The ocean needs to stay healthy because it not only provides a food source that feeds the whole world, including many other sea animals, but it also provides most of the oxygen that we use to breathe. That is something that I was surprised to learn and now even more so, I want to take care of the ocean. Our oceans have a very sensitive ecosystem that if we don't start to take care of we will lose all the benefits it provides us.

Some ways that I think would help stop this problem is by having a better management system. There needs to be a monitoring system and then a strong enforcement to make it work. Second, I know by talking to people and telling them that this problem is here and it will help to educate people who don't know about it. I would not have known about this if my uncle didn't tell me about it, and I think there are a lot of people who don't know that our fish supply is disappearing. Maybe some people wouldn't care because they don't eat fish, but if they knew about how it would affect them in other ways they would want to help protect our oceans.

So, please don't over fish. Remember to put the large fish back so they can produce more fish, and take the medium fish, but take only what you need. Don't be greedy. Over fishing will hurt all of us and there will be no fish left for our future generations. Think about it, Hawaii's supply of near shore reef fish has declined. What we decide to do today will determine the amount of fish we will have tomorrow. I wouldn't want my nephew asking me, "Where have all the fish gone?"