

# MISMANAGED FISHERIES ARE AN ECONOMIC THREAT

December 2022

Building support for protecting fisheries begins at the kitchen table. It is an economic issue. It is about protecting jobs. Creating new jobs. Fishing jobs, yes. But also canning jobs, jobs for market vendors, chefs, restaurant workers, truck drivers, grocery workers, boat repair and maintenance services, and more. A stable, well-managed fishery supports jobs that help strengthen and grow the economy, both today and for generations to come.

Our research<sup>1</sup> across the South Pacific and Latin America shows a wide understanding of the threats facing fisheries. At a base level, people are concerned about the environmental impacts of mismanaged fisheries. But that is not existential. When they learn about the economic impact of mismanaged fisheries on their communities, however, the issue becomes an immediate threat to people's livelihoods in both coastal and inland communities alike.

## Key Findings:

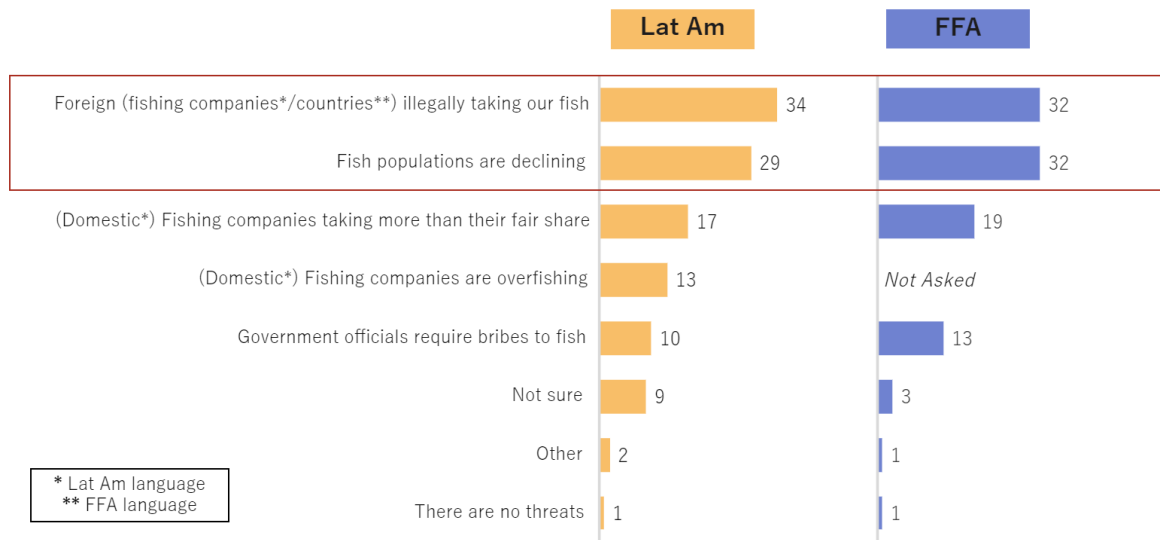
- **The cost of living and the economy are *the* dominant issues.** Despite being a world apart, there is a surprisingly consistent story across the South Pacific and Latin American countries. Over half (56% in Latin America and 58% in the South Pacific) say the cost of living and prices is their top concern today.
- **Natural resources, including fish, are only “benefiting the few.”** Two thirds of respondents in the South Pacific and Latin America say natural resources currently only benefit the few. Respondents also believe natural resources should be protected in the long term rather than used (62% protect, 33% use in Latin America; 47% protect, 38% use in the South Pacific). There’s a broad desire to protect natural resources for everyone and the future, although economic needs create urgency.
- **People view fish as a valuable natural resource that should be protected to confer benefit to everyone, now and in the future.** Over 90% of people in the South Pacific and Latin America say the fishing industry is important to their country’s economy. 88% of respondents in Latin

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<sup>1</sup> On behalf of Accountability.Fish, ClearPath Strategies conducted public opinion research on fisheries management. We conducted 2 focus groups in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea June 2-3, 2022, and 2 focus groups in Guayaquil, Ecuador June 8-9, 2022. We conducted a face-to-face survey of n=800 (MoE +/-3.6%) interviews across Papua New Guinea (n=500, MoE +/-4.4%), The Federated States of Micronesia (n=150, MoE +/-8.0%), and the Cook Islands (n=150, MoE +/-8.0%) July 1 - August 12, 2022. We also conducted a mixed mode online and face-to-face survey of n=808 (MoE +/-3.6%) interviews across Costa Rica (n=202), Ecuador (n=204), Mexico (n=202), and Panama (n=200) (MoE for each +/-6.9%) from August 5-31, 2022.

America believe it is urgent to address problems within the fishing industry, with over half believing it's *very* urgent.

- **Strong support for sustainable fishing practices and clear understanding of the threats.** A vast majority of people in the South Pacific (97%) and Latin America (88%) believe in the importance of “sustainable fishing”.



Q. Some people say fishing and fishermen in [COUNTRY] face threats. (Below are a/ I am going to read you a) list of those possible threats. Even if you are not too familiar, please tell me which ONE you think is the biggest threat facing fishermen and fishing in [COUNTRY].

Figure I. Side-by-side comparison of the biggest threat facing fishermen and fishing in Latin America and the South Pacific (labeled FFA).

- **The environment is low on the list of top priorities. But fishing management becomes more urgent with an economic lens.** Just 12% in Latin America and 8% in the South Pacific say the environment is a top concern. As we said above, the economy dominates. When people learn about the economic impact of fishing mismanagement, urgency on fishing reform rises 5 points in the South Pacific and 13 points in Latin America.
- **Government mismanagement and corruption are a familiar factor, and perceived to be more damaging than corporate greed.** Over half (65%) in the South Pacific believe the national government is corrupt, and 57% believe corruption raises prices for all. In Latin America, 64% believe government corruption is the primary problem rather than greedy corporations. This lack of transparency and accountability allows for IUU fishing to persist and to go on unchecked.

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We are in an economic moment globally. Proper fisheries management is an economic imperative. While people share our values on the environment and fish, it is a relatively soft priority. We can raise urgency of these problems by leveraging the economic threat and the specter of government

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mismanagement.

*Methodology Note:* On behalf of Accountability.Fish, ClearPath Strategies conducted this two-part public opinion based study on fisheries management in Latin America and the southern Pacific. ClearPath Strategies is a research-driven strategic partner to leaders and progressive organizations around the world and employs decades of experience in campaign strategy to solve their most pressing challenges. Part 1 of the A.F/ClearPath study consisted of focus groups in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and Guayaquil, Ecuador in June 2022. Part 2 consisted of a face-to-face survey across the South Pacific (Papua New Guinea, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Cook Islands) from July-August 2022, as well as a mixed mode online and face-to-face survey across Latin America (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Panama) in August 2022.