

Indigenous Peoples and local communities, Traditional Knowledge, and Cultural Connections to the high seas



Photo: National Geographic



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ABNJ as the global commons

- All of humanity are stakeholders of the high seas
- This diversity of voices not reflected in UN negotiations
- Indigenous Peoples & local communities missing from debate

Why?

- Community efforts often perceived as too limited in scale to matter globally
- Communities are concerned that focus on high seas may take support and funding away from coastal conservation

A world of communities

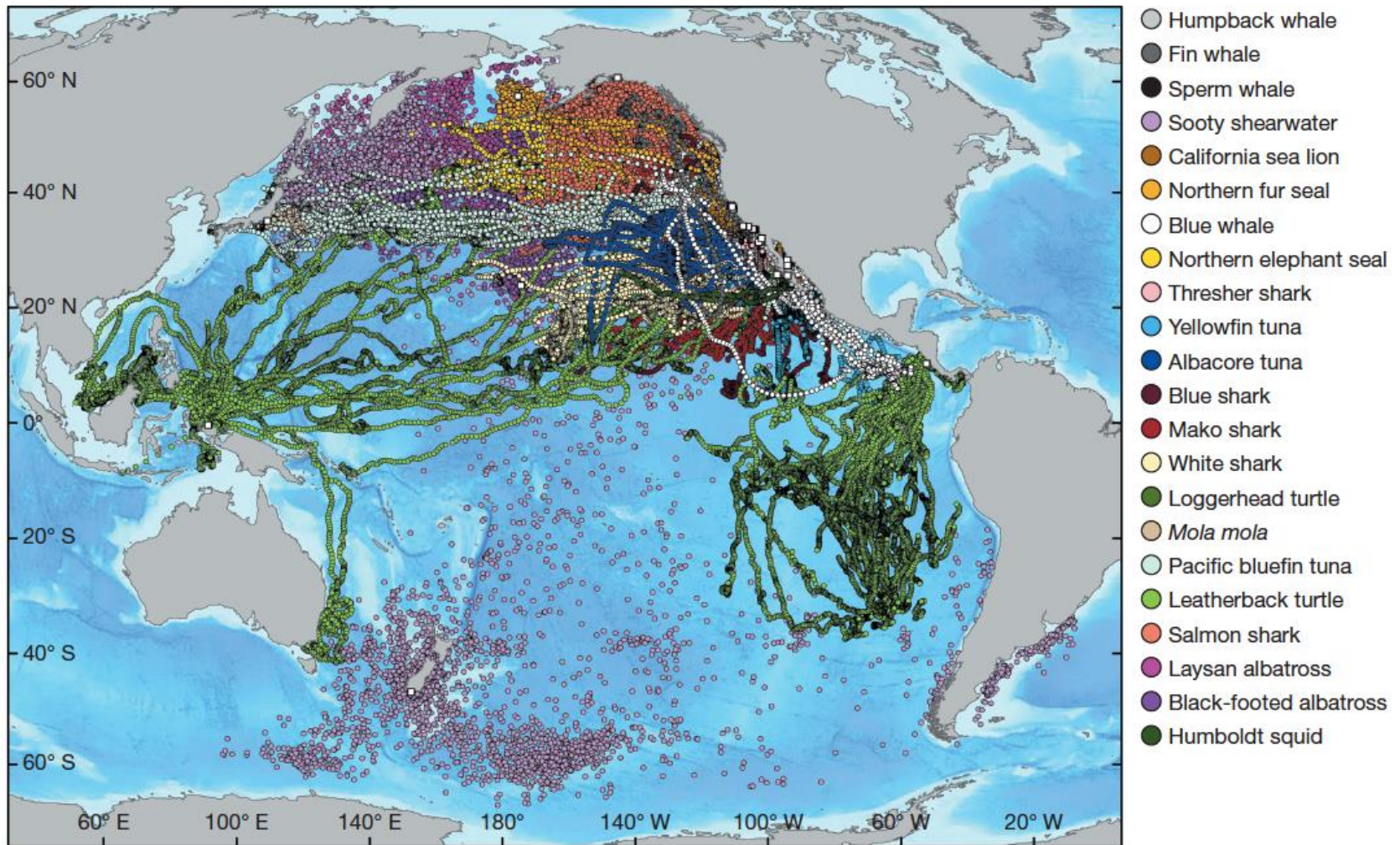


Global map of indigenous coastal communities

Cisneros-Montemayor, A and Ota, Y. et al. (2016) A global estimate of seafood consumption by coastal Indigenous peoples



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Many species that are culturally, socially or economically important to communities migrate offshore for large parts of their life cycles

Communities matter to ABNJ governance

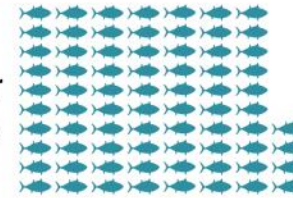
- Communities are primary custodians of many globally-significant migratory species and their habitats
- Life histories of these species may straddle jurisdictions and span entire oceans
- Communities are often the first to suffer if these species decline due to inadequate management in the high seas
- Traditional Knowledge and practices have relevance to global ocean governance
- Decisions about ocean governance affect food security and cultural identity of communities

A global estimate of seafood consumption by coastal Indigenous peoples

Andrés M. Cisneros-Montemayor, Daniel Pauly, Lauren V. Weatherdon, and Yoshitaka Ota, 2016.

Coastal Indigenous peoples:

74 kg per capita



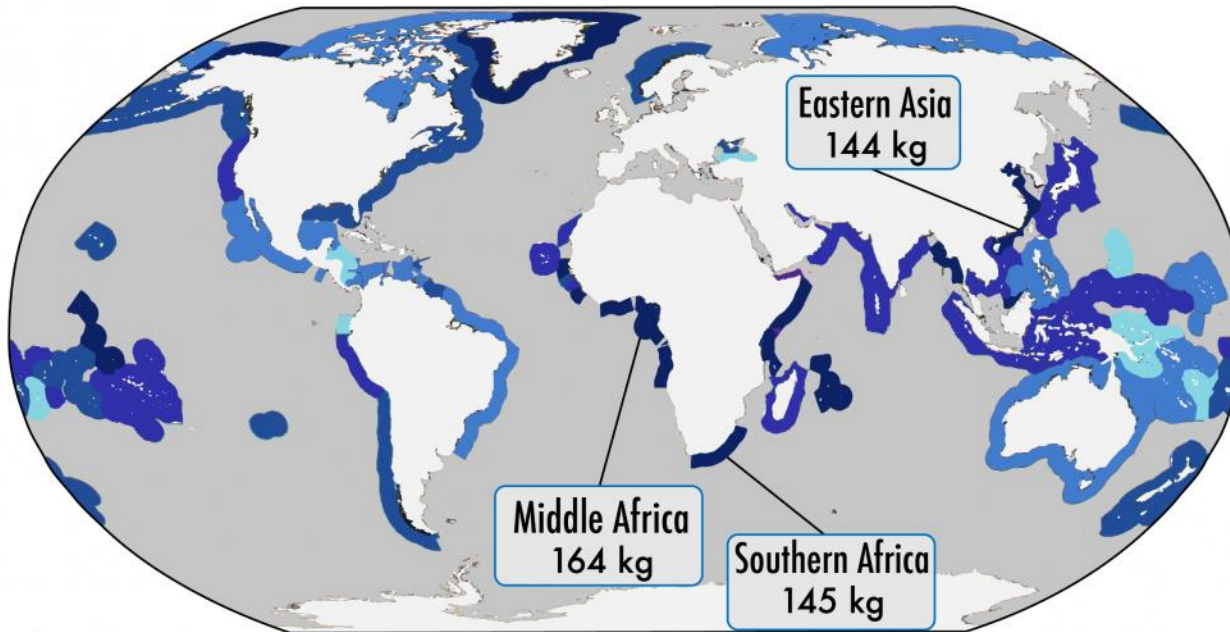
Global average:

19 kg per capita

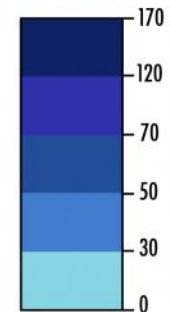


Coastal Indigenous Peoples database:

More than **1900** communities identified & **600** ethnic groups.



Fish consumption in kg per person per year:



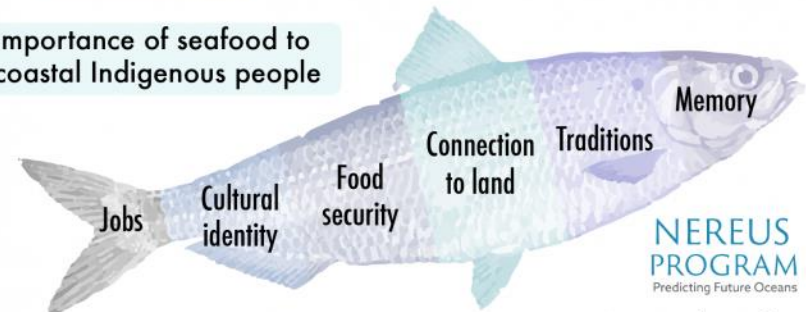
2.1

million metric tonnes

Coastal Indigenous people's consumption of seafood per year



Importance of seafood to coastal Indigenous people



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Design by Lindsay Lafreniere

Culturally significant migratory species



Humpback whale (e.g. Pacific Islands, Hawaii, New Zealand, Pacific Northwest, Arctic)

Sperm whale (e.g. Pacific islands, Hawaii, Pacific Northwest)

Loggerhead turtle (e.g. Gulf of California, Mexico, Northern Australia)

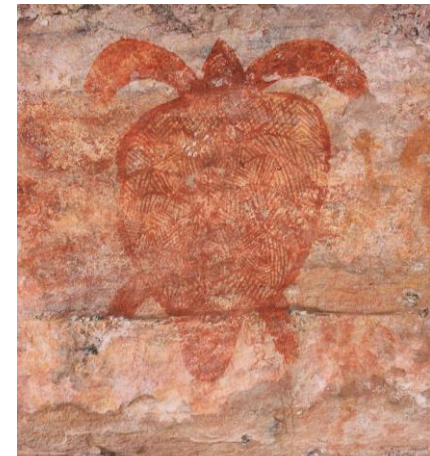
Leatherback turtle (e.g. Pacific Islands, Gulf of California, Central and South America)

Salmon (e.g. Pacific Northwest, Arctic)

Yellowfin tuna (e.g. Pacific Islands, Asia, Caribbean)

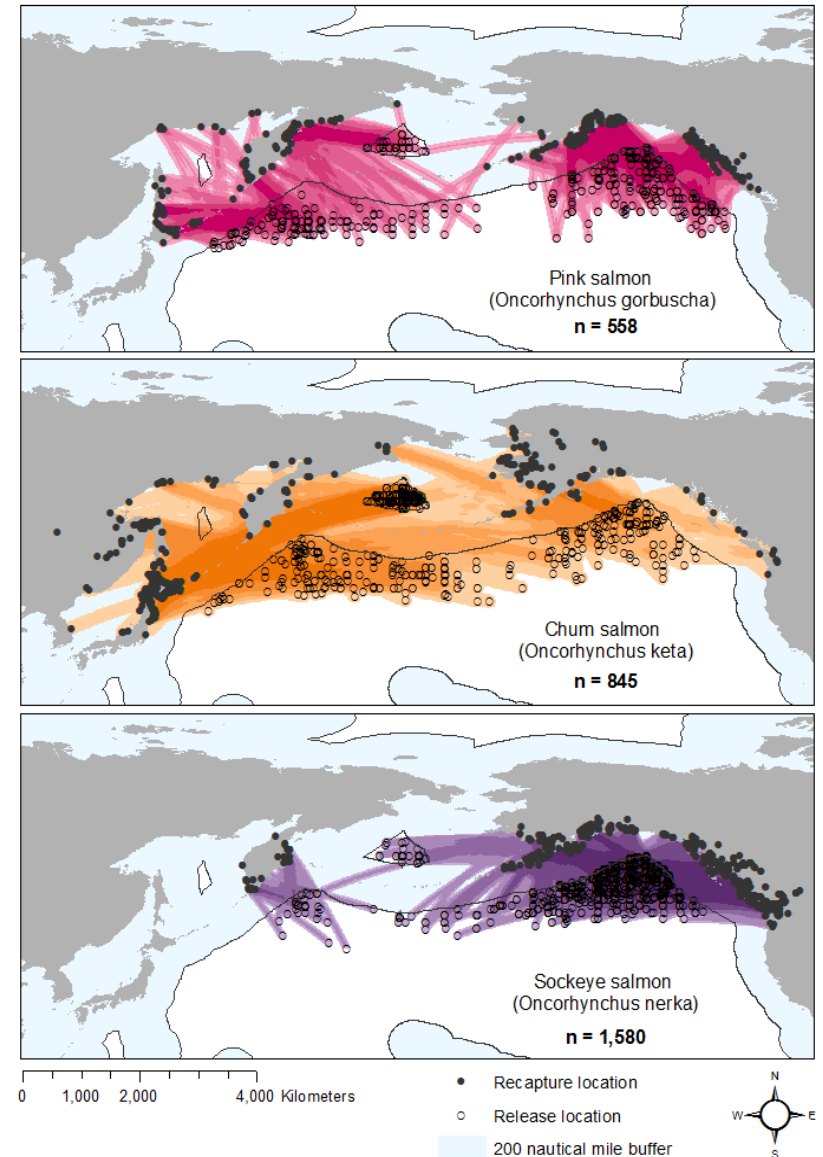
Great white shark (e.g. Hawaii, Northern Australia)

Whale shark (Central America, Asia)



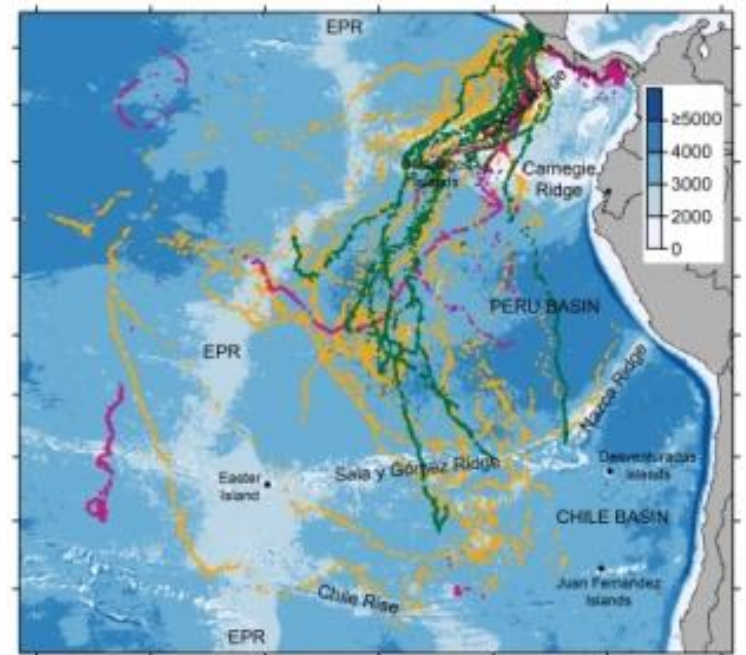
Example 1: Pacific Salmon

- For millennia Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific Northwest have relied on the harvest of wild salmon for food security and culture
- Migrations link high seas with Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Because of the connectivity between IPLCs and the high seas, IPLCs have an interest in the application of adjacency
- Need for cooperative governance



Example 2: Leatherback turtle

- Western Pacific Leatherbacks visited 49 EEZs sovereign to 33 States during their migrations
- Traveled through “donut holes”, and made trans-Pacific migrations through areas beyond national jurisdiction
- Because the species and cultural and economic importance to IPLCs there is a role for consulting IPLCs in the application of adjacency
- Playa Grande, Costa Rica
 - one of the largest leatherback nesting sites in the world – species conservation and economic benefits locally
 - Greater than 40% mortality rate in the returning adult population over the last eight years



Models for inclusive participation

- **Arctic Council:** Indigenous Peoples organizations have permanent participant status and work with scientists in assessment and monitoring of biodiversity & climate change
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** Attempts to incorporate traditional knowledge in identification of EBSAs
- **Collaborations between scientists & traditional knowledge holders:** Migratory species research, animal behaviour, ecology, climate change



Dr. Hoyt Peckham with Mexican fishermen at a ceremony marking the decision to retire the bottom-set longlines that were killing hundreds of turtles

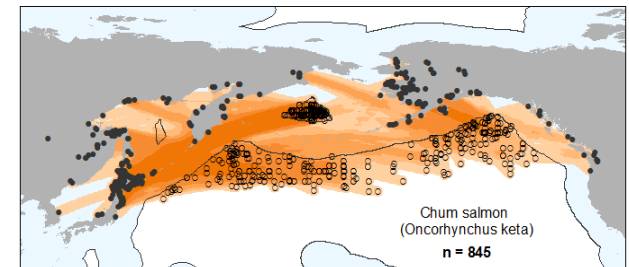
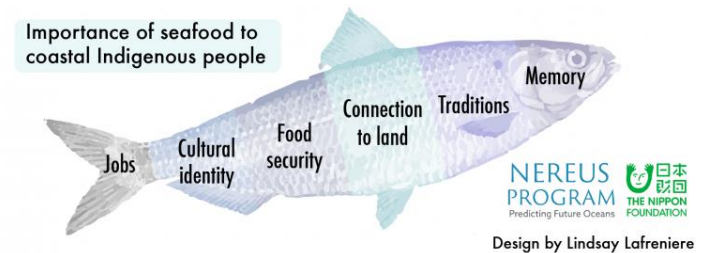
Benefits of inclusive participation

- **Accounting for connectivity:** Linking conservation efforts at different scales, from coastal to offshore
- **Fostering innovation:** enriching the diversity of available approaches and solutions and broadening understanding of governance approaches (ecosystem approach, adaptive management, intergenerational equity)



Take home messages

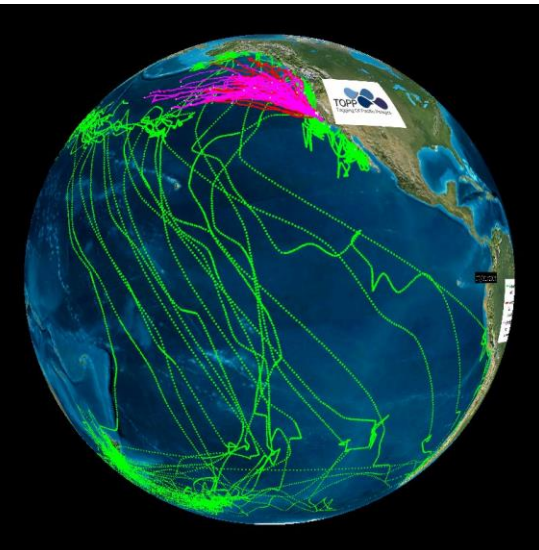
- Indigenous Peoples and local communities value and depend on highly migratory species
- The life histories of these species span entire oceans and are subject to threats and pressures beyond the control of any one entity.
- Traditional Knowledge can also help elaborate on principles that are of direct relevance for governance of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction.



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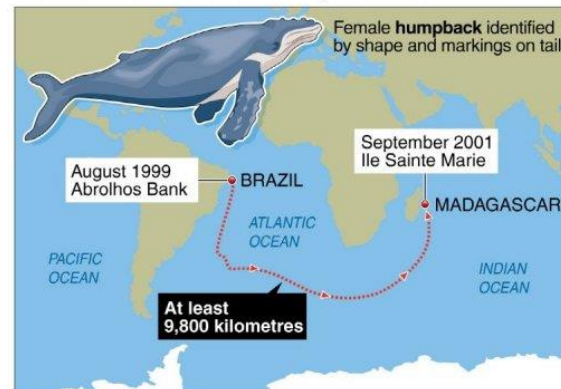


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Epic whale migration

World record for distance travelled by a mammal



Previously thought that only male humpbacks travelled long distances to find mates

Offers insight into migration patterns previously reckoned to be limited to a north-south movement

AFP

