

Protecting Our Prey

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Course: English 102

Instructor: Ms. Natasha Whitton

Essay Type: Argument

Commercial fishing is one of the largest industries in the world. It supplies millions of dollars to the economy and provides numerous jobs. Commercial fishing is important to me because generations of my family were commercial fishermen. Though I am not a commercial fisherman, the industry is still important to me and is part of my heritage. Yet, a problem exists not only in my home state of Louisiana, but in the rest of the world, as well. This problem is called overfishing, and it poses a threat not only to marine life but also to the fishing industry. Plans to prevent overfishing have been suggested, and I have read of one with which I strongly agree. "No-take areas" just may be the solution to overfishing. These areas are "marine reserves where no extractive activities are allowed" (Scully B. 15). I believe humans should be able to fish the seas; however, no-take areas should be implemented to protect marine life and to protect the fishing industry.

No-take areas should be implemented to protect marine life. These areas would be strictly off limits to any human activities. Ben Harder notes that marine ecosystems have sustained damage from modernized fishing (59). Harder claims that "Such no-take zones can serve as refuges for breeding and immature fish" (59). Here, marine life would be able to reproduce and repopulate much more efficiently. Carl Safina explains that "Fish do grow larger and more abundant in areas where there is no fishing, and larger fish produce disproportionately more offspring than smaller fish" (49). I believe that we, as humans, ought to be inclined to protect marine life if we wish to continue to use it as a resource.

No-take areas should be implemented to protect the fishing industry. This may sound very odd to most; nonetheless, it is true. Marine populations have been decreasing for years due to overfishing. Accordingly, commercial fishing has yielded smaller catches. If overfishing continues, the seas will become barren bodies of lifeless waters. Many people in my community are commercial fishermen and have been all of their lives. These people know no other trade than that of fishing. Fishing important not only to our fishermen, but also to our economy. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, each year fifty-billion dollars is attributed to the United States gross domestic product by the fishing industry (Safina 49). By implementing these no-take areas, we would be protecting marine life and commercial fishermen, as well as our economy.

I feel relatively certain that many commercial fishermen would reject the idea of no-take areas. Some may deny that marine populations are being depleted. Some may argue that unprotected fishing areas would eventually become too crowded with fishing vessels. This problem could lead to smaller yields per vessel. However, if these no-take areas are not established, overfishing will reach its peak, and commercial fishing may no longer be an option. In Tom Regan's "Religion and Animal Rights," he states that "there is a morally relevant difference between human beings and every other creaturely expression of God" (627). Regan feels that humans are responsible for protecting non-human animals and that these animals should not be used as food for humans. I agree with Regan's idea of animal protection by humans; however, I feel humans should be able to use these animals as food. Finally, if marine life is not protected as with the establishment of no-take areas, these aquatic animals may no longer be a food option.

No-take areas should be implemented to protect marine life and to protect the fishing industry. In Maxine Kumin's "Woodchucks," she feels that "gassing the woodchucks" was necessary to protect her food source, the garden (504). No-take areas are necessary to protect many humans' food source, seafood. Kumin was just as bothered by having to kill the woodchucks to protect her garden as having no-take areas might bother to fishermen. Nevertheless, sometimes we must do what bothers us in order to protect others.

Works Cited

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- Kumin, Maxine. "Woodchucks." *Reading Literature and Writing Argument*. Eds. Missy James and Alan P. Merickel. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002. 504.
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- Safina, Carl. "The Continued Danger of Overfishing." *Issues in Science and Technology*. Summer 2003: 49.
- Scully, Malcolm G. "Marine Reserves: Recovering the Sea's Former Glory." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 8 Aug. 2003: B.15.

Jacque Pitre's major is Undeclared.

Ms. Whitton's Comments: *In this assignment, Jacques was asked to consider the potential of human power and whether it implies personal responsibility toward the natural world. He was to choose a particular case in which human needs came into conflict with the environment and to offer a solution to the problem. As this was an English 102 essay, I was impressed by the way that Jacques used his personal experience to inform his argument while still including research to support his assumptions. The result is an excellent example of how classroom writing relates to life experience.*