



A GUIDE FOR MORE & BIGGER FISH



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES

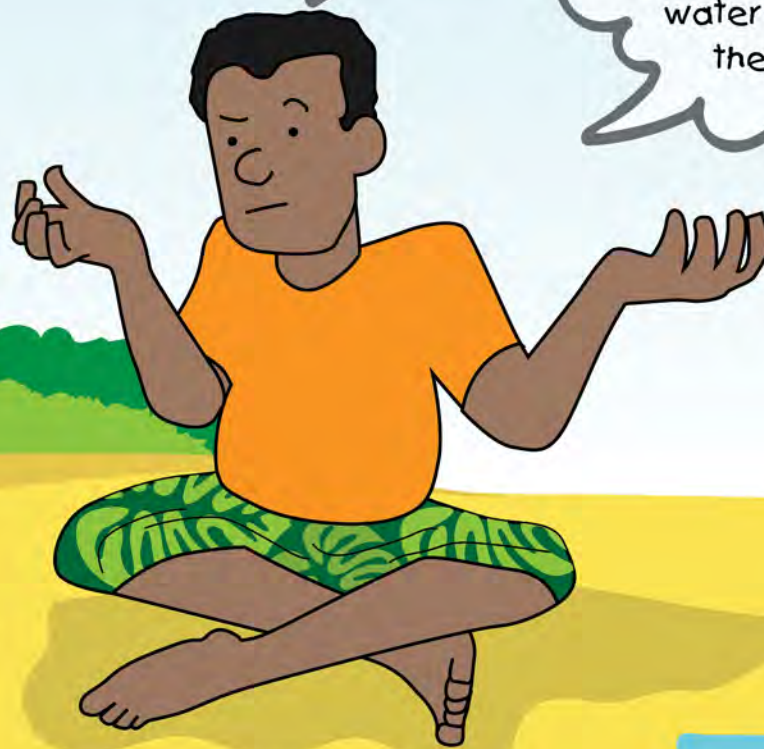
When we start talking about overfishing in Fiji, here are the kinds of responses we hear most often.

We can never run out of fish, the ocean is big.

God gave us these fish, we should eat it.

What are we supposed to live on? Do you have alternatives?

How do you know they're less? Do you go underneath the water & count the fish?



But if you ask people how their catches have changed over the years, here is what you find.

These fish can feed my koro!



1980

These fish can feed my family!



2000

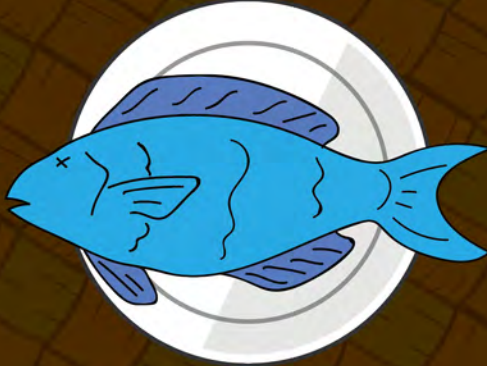
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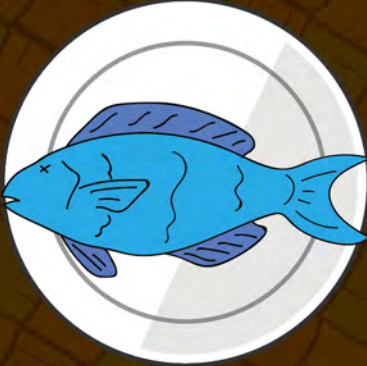
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And even if you are not a fisherman, you are likely aware that times have changed. Fish are smaller on our plates, and smaller in the markets.

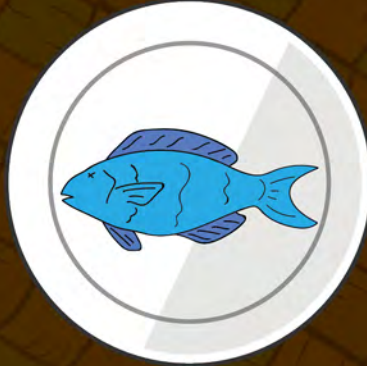
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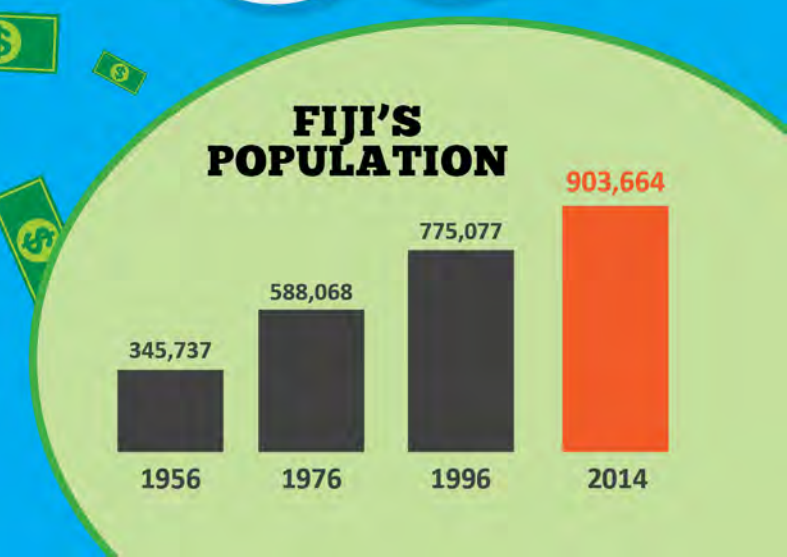
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It's also taking us more time and costing us more money to catch fish than it did in the past.



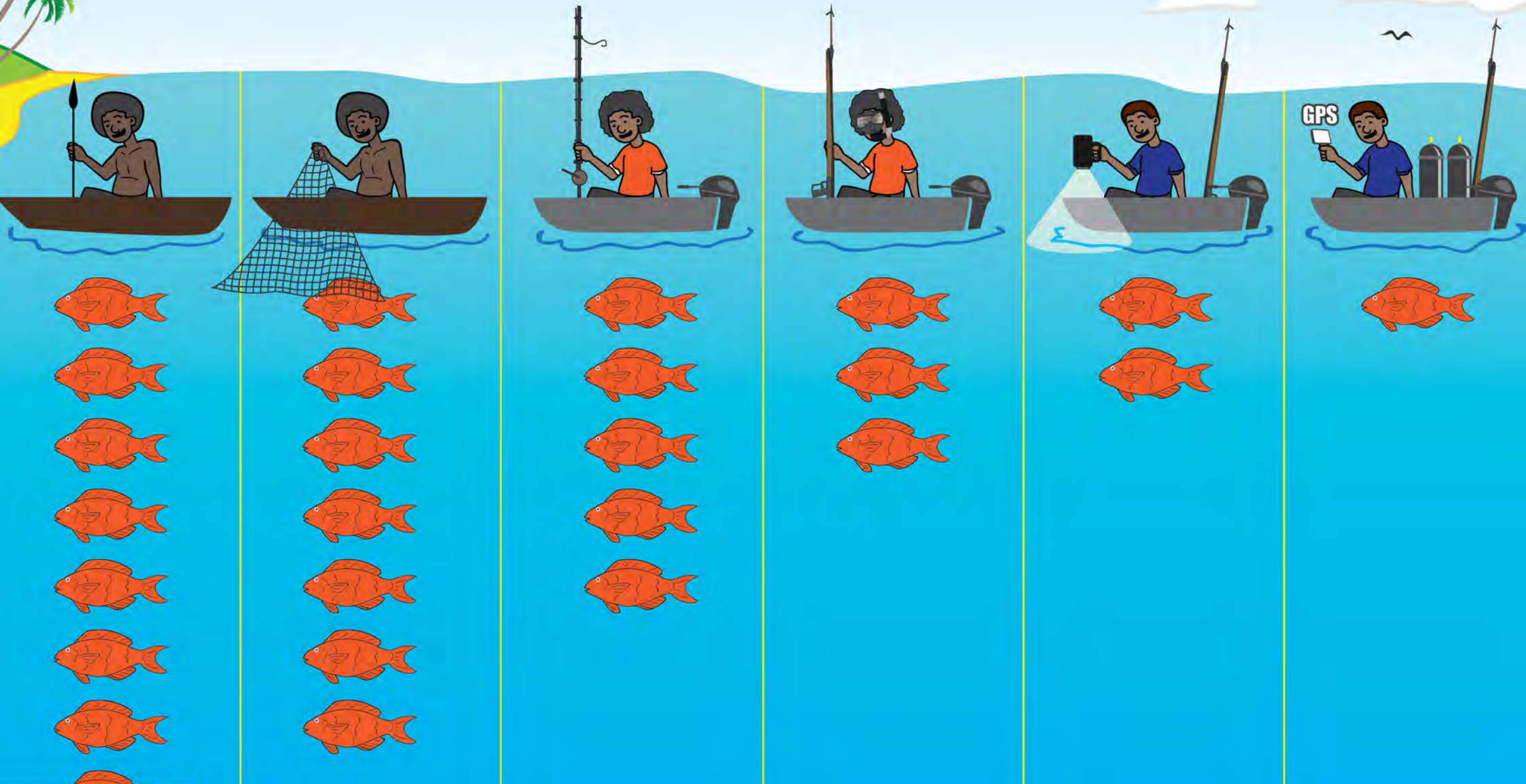
So why has fishing changed so much? We are fishing more than ever, because we have more mouths to feed and we have more needs today than ever before.



As our needs have increased, the good news is we have more opportunities to sell fish and earn money than ever before.



As our ability to sell fish has increased, so has our fishing gear, allowing us to catch more fish than ever before, leaving very few behind.



So how do we know? One way is to talk to fishermen. We did and all across Fiji they are telling a similar story. Fishing is getting harder and harder.

We no longer do any traditional fishing because the fish has depleted.
Akanisa Lewasaro Loaloa, Bua



There's not much today. We usually fish near the beach but now we have to go out further.
Ratu Rokotola Katonivualiku, Macuata



The daily traditional fishing has ceased, because the fish no longer has any chance to grow big.
Jone Baravilala, Ba



Before it used to take a short while to fish and we'd get big fish easily. Now we have to go far and the fish are smaller.
Sikeli Naitura, Ra



The number of large fishes that we used to catch before has depleted today.
Jona Ravašakula, Tailevu



The number of matu that we are traditionally well known for has greatly depleted as well as other fishes.
Josateki Vakacereivalu, Kadavu



The reason our fish are declining is simple: We are allowing too few to get big enough to breed and restock the reef. This is what overfishing means.



If you catch our fish before they get big enough to breed, they can't restock the reefs. So each year, we have less fish to catch.

If you wait till they get big enough to breed, we ensure they can restock our reefs each year. We also get bigger fish.

Overfishing typically happens in the same way everywhere. First, the biggest, most valuable fish, disappear. Then it goes right down the food chain.



Phase 1: Big is best, and first to go



Phase 2: High value, for market and culture, go next



Phase 3: Easy to catch are next group to go



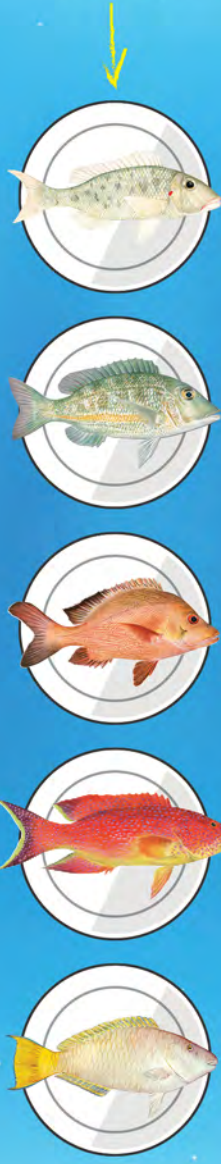
Phase 4: Eventually only fish no-one wants are left



This?



**Or
this?**

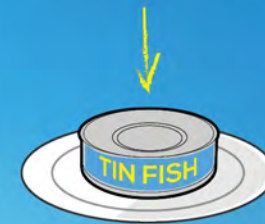


You can figure out how overfished your fishing grounds are by looking at what you are selling or eating. How far down the food chain you are, tells you how bad the problem is.

Or this?



Or this?

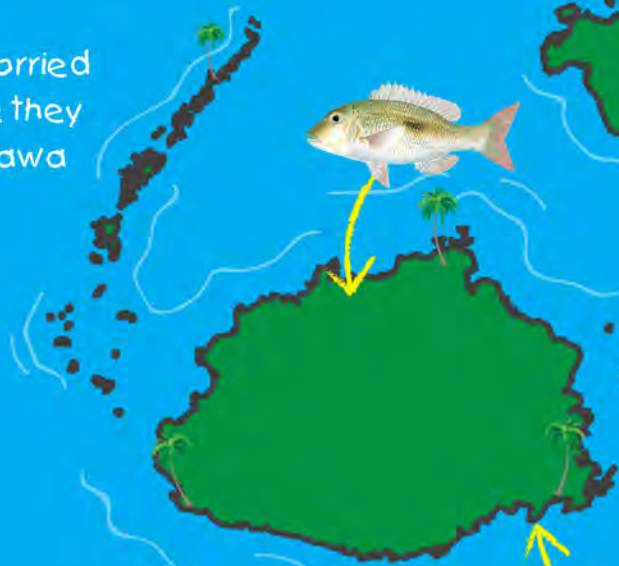


We asked places across Fiji what they were catching and worried about losing to gauge the health of their fishing grounds.

In communities in Macuata, kawakawa is their big concern.



But in Tavua, they are worried about Kabatia because they don't get much kawakawa any more.



If you go to Suva, most people would be eating tin tuna, if people were not sending fish to the markets.



The closer you are to a city or town market often means you have less fish left.

For communities and for Fiji government, there are a few things you can do to ensure you have enough fish getting big enough to breed and restock your fishing grounds.

Ban harmful gear to ensure you maintain enough breeding stock



Establish size limits to ensure fish reach breeding sizes



Limit fishing licenses to ensure you have enough fish for community



Establish tabu areas to create more breeding stock



Create seasonal bans to protect key breeding sites



So what should you do now? If any fishing regulation is going to work, at the community level, or national level, here are some simple steps:

1. **Start talking about the problem**
2. **Agree on Rules/Action**
3. **If catches improve, keep it going. If not, try something else.**



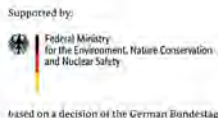
A CAMPAIGN FOR MORE AND BIGGER FISH

Across Fiji, fish are getting smaller and smaller, and fishing is getting harder and harder. That means people are having a harder time meeting their food and income needs. Led by the Ministry of Fisheries, Set Size is a campaign to help revive Fiji's reefs by encouraging people to avoid undersize fish.

The booklet was developed by cChange, a regional communications non-profit, and Biospherics, an Australia-based independent research and development consultancy, for the Ministry of Fisheries. WWF and Wildlife Conservation Society are supporting the Ministry of Fisheries and its Set Size campaign by working directly with communities to facilitate Set Size fish assessments and facilitating management actions.

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Follow us at www.facebook.com/setsize.



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