

Legislation Addressing Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (Pirate Fishing)



House Bill: H.R. 69 Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2013

Senate Bills: S. 267 Pirate Fishing Elimination Act
S. 269 International Fisheries Stewardship and Enforcement Act

Quick Facts:

- H.R. 69 and S. 269 harmonize important existing high seas fishing statutes to streamline enforcement
- H.R. 69 and S. 269 expand the authority of the US to list not only IUU nations, but individual vessels
- S. 267 allows the US to deny port entry and services to vessels involved in IUU fishing or transporting IUU fish which is difficult to do now



The Issue: For decades, national governments, international agencies, and nonprofit marine conservation organizations have sought, with limited success, ways to reduce the impacts of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, also known as pirate fishing. Pirate fishing decimates fish populations, damages national economies and law abiding fishermen around the world, and causes hunger in some developing countries. IUU fishing also threatens sensitive ocean habitats such as seamounts and coastal waters protected in marine protected areas while threatening the livelihood of legitimate fishermen. It exacerbates poverty, food insecurity, and political turmoil in many coastal countries in Africa and around the world by draining coastal fish populations for the consumption of rich and powerful countries. This is no small problem. According to best estimates, the value of IUU fishing is between \$10 and \$23 billion per year of the international fish trade and up to one third of global catch. The US, the world's second largest importer of fish, likely imports around \$2 billion annually of IUU fish. With one in every five fish imported into the US being IUU fish, pirate fishing hurts US fishermen and may cause the loss of 28,000 jobs in fishing and processing alone, not counting indirect economic impacts on fishing communities. Although IUU fishing is prosecuted under several current US laws, additional measures, both national and international, are needed to reduce IUU fishing effectively.

How These Bills Help: IUU fishing is difficult to detect, especially in countries with poor to nonexistent law enforcement capability, and on the high seas outside the 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone of coastal nations. But when detected or when shipments of fish are suspect, it is important to deny them entry to American markets. Denying access to the world's second largest market for imported fish will help stop IUU fishing from 'paying off'. The two bills in the Senate, S. 267 and S. 269 and another in the

House, H.R. 69 (113th Congress), will help reduce the level of IUU fish being imported into the US and reduce the economic incentive to engage in this illegal and environmentally destructive practice.

The International Fisheries Stewardship and Enforcement Act, S. 269, and the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2013, H.R. 69, are technical measures that strengthen and streamline the enforcement of 10 important high seas fishing statutes. Streamlining these measures for authorized officers, primarily the US Coast Guard, allows for better enforcement of IUU fishing measures and clearer definitions of their enforcement powers. *Laws that are difficult to enforce are often enforced badly.* Additionally, these Acts allow the US to identify and blacklist individual fishing vessels and fishing vessel owners that participate in IUU fishing or related activities and to take action against these individual vessels and vessel owners.

The Pirate Fishing Elimination Act, S.267 would implement the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, finalized at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which makes it illegal to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase any fish or fish product that was caught in violation of any international treaty or any conservation or management measure. This Act gives US additional tools to deny port entry and services to ships carrying IUU fish. It would give enforcement personnel advanced warning that ships carrying fish are about to enter our ports, providing extra time for key enforcement activities. Passing this bill and affirming the international agreement will send a powerful message to other countries to do the same; and if they adopt the same treaty too, it will help them prevent the landing of IUU fish and re-exporting it to the US.

Why You Should Support These Bills: The US imports approximately \$2 billion annually in IUU seafood, perpetuating this destructive practice while also damaging the livelihoods of legitimate US fishermen by undercutting the value of US caught products. IUU fishing may be costing Americans 28,000 jobs. By stopping IUU fishing and the importation of IUU seafood into the US you will be protecting US fishermen and fishing communities. You will be helping to end a practice that threatens ocean habitats, food security, and international security. Please contact the Mike Gravitz at the Marine Conservation Institute with any questions concerning IUU fishing or these three bills.

About Marine Conservation Institute

Marine Conservation Institute is a U.S. nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting marine ecosystems. We work with scientists, politicians, government officials and other organizations in the United States and around the world to fashion solutions to problems affecting marine ecosystems which are long lasting and compatible with sustainable ocean use.

