Global Fishing Watch

In landmark year for ocean transparency, Global Fishing Watch maps entire industrial fishing fleet

New technologies, expanded partnerships and policy breakthroughs move the organization closer to its 2030 goal of embedding transparency as global norm in ocean governance

Washington, D.C., UNITED STATES — Global Fishing Watch today released its 2025 Annual Report, highlighting a year of substantial progress in advancing ocean transparency through new technologies, expanded partnerships and key policy milestones. From securing advocacy gains at the United Nations and mapping the carbon footprint of industrial vessels to strengthening fisheries oversight worldwide, the international nonprofit moved closer to its 2030 goal of mapping all human activity at sea and transforming the way the ocean is managed.

"Global Fishing Watch's mission is rooted in the belief that transparency and technology are the most powerful tools we have to protect our ocean," said Tony Long, chief executive officer of Global Fishing Watch. "As we move closer to 2030, that belief is no longer abstract — it's grounded in real, measurable impact."

The report underscores Global Fishing Watch's scaled contributions throughout 2025 as it broadened support for monitoring, control and surveillance efforts across more than 70 million square kilometers of ocean and helped facilitate over 400 actions against vessels involved in illicit activity. At the same time, the report flags significant growth in the organization's global reach and technological capabilities, noting a 20 percent increase in the number of new registered map users and a striking 8.4 million page views — a 31 percent uptick compared with 2024.

"By providing free, open access to our data and analysis, we empower a global network of governments, civil society, academia, the media and the public to monitor activity at sea and drive accountability across our ocean," Long added.

A year of groundbreaking technology gains

Amid a year of major milestones, the annual report spotlights the expanding use of Global Fishing Watch's tools and technology, including its mapping of 100 percent of the global industrial fishing fleet, reinforcing their growing role in fisheries management, carbon emissions monitoring and biodiversity protection.

The past year saw a steady expansion of Global Fishing Watch's monitoring capabilities through the integration of Sentinel-2 optical satellite imagery into its platform, effectively tripling detection capacity and allowing users to identify boats and offshore infrastructure that radar-based monitoring previously missed. The advancement is particularly important for coastal and nearshore waters, where fishing activity is most concentrated but vessel tracking

coverage has historically been limited. The report adds that Sentinel-2 contributed to the expansion of Global Fishing Watch's total coverage of 291 million square kilometers of ocean monitored by satellite imagery, helping generate a total of 45 million vessel detections and 2.5 million offshore infrastructure detections.

Building on these advances, the report also highlights the ongoing success of Global Fishing Watch's marine manager portal, co-developed with Dona Bertarelli, as well as major improvements to the Vessel Viewer tool, designed to help authorities conduct due diligence and carry out operational planning. New vessel insight reports provide a detailed view of vessel identities, ownership histories and activity patterns, enabling fisheries managers to cross-reference vessels against regional illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing lists, identify suspicious tracking gaps and determine whether vessels have operated in restricted areas or waters where they lack authorization. A new automated group analysis feature further strengthens monitoring by allowing users to track up to 1,000 vessels simultaneously, streamlining fleet-wide surveillance and supporting faster, more informed enforcement decisions.

At the same time, a 2025 analysis conducted in partnership with University of California, Santa Barbara's Environmental Markets Lab (emLab) and Climate TRACE successfully mapped and estimated the carbon emissions of large industrial vessels for the first time, revealing that industrial vessels emitted around 1.3 billion tons of CO2 in 2023, or about 3 percent of global fossil fuel emissions, and underscoring the growing role Global Fishing Watch tools play in examining human activity's impact on the environment.

"Last year marked remarkable progress for Global Fishing Watch's innovation team as we continue to push the boundaries of technology and transparency," said Paul Woods, chief innovation officer and co-founder of Global Fishing Watch. "By advancing satellite analysis and machine learning, we're transforming how the world sees activity at sea. Better data means stronger enforcement, smarter decisions and a more sustainable ocean."

Championing transparency: from the U.N. to enhanced marine protections

Against this backdrop, the report also highlights Global Fishing Watch's growing influence in shaping international ocean policy. In July, the international policy team helped secure explicit language calling for greater transparency in the official outcome document of the U.N. Ocean Conference in Nice, France. This achievement builds on the organization's 2024 success at the United Nations in New York, where transparency was recognized as a core principle of ocean governance through the U.N. Sustainable Fisheries Resolution.

Across the global stage, Global Fishing Watch continued to deepen partnerships with national governments to strengthen oversight of fishing activity. In Brazil, a reinforced collaboration with national authorities resulted in a comprehensive work plan aimed at combating illegal fishing, improving transparency and strengthening monitoring and control of fishing activities. In Chile, the organization's work with the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service helped enable a

groundbreaking government resolution authorizing citizen surveillance of the Juan Fernández Islands' marine protected areas, significantly expanding the reach of official oversight. Meanwhile, a new partnership with the government of Gabon is now laying the groundwork for closer cooperation on monitoring, control and surveillance of the country's vast marine resources through enhanced data sharing.

Expanding global reach through strategic partnerships

In a similar vein, the report also underscores Global Fishing Watch's growing network of partnerships and how they help the organization accelerate the development of new tools to illuminate human activity at sea. According to Global Fishing Watch chief executive officer Tony Long, partnerships remain "central to expanding transparency across the ocean."

Collaboration is also driving new transparency tools for emerging ocean industries. In December, the Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory launched Deep-Sea Mining Watch, an open-access portal powered by Global Fishing Watch technology that tracks vessels involved in deep-sea mineral exploration. By bringing vessel tracking data to one of the ocean's newest and most controversial industries, the platform helps shed light on activity in the deep ocean and supports greater transparency around its potential impacts on fisheries and marine ecosystems.

"The past year was integral to achieving Global Fishing Watch's vision for a transparent future for our ocean. As we continue work in 2026, our focus remains steady even as our ambition grows," Long continued. "By expanding the reach of our technology and deepening our global partnerships, we are empowering the stewards of our seas with the tools they need to act. Together, we are driving a decisive and necessary shift from opacity to accountability across the global ocean."

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