An underwater photograph showing a large school of fish swimming over a coral reef. The water is clear and blue, and the coral is visible at the bottom. The fish are of various species and colors, including some with yellow and black stripes.

# ***Major Commercial Fisheries of the World***

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# Introduction

- **Commercial fishing**, the taking of fish and other seafood and resources from oceans, rivers, and lakes for the purpose of marketing them.
- Commercial fishing doesn't catch only fish. Fishing ships also catch mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms. They also harvest seaweed which is harvested in the water or on the seashore. Seaweed is used for human consumption, as food for cattle, as a fertilizer, and certain industries use it as a raw material.
- Fishing is one of the oldest employments of humankind.
- Fish provides nutrients and micronutrients that are essential to cognitive and physical development, especially in children, and are an important part of a healthy diet. As an affordable animal source of protein in some of the poorest countries, fish is the primary source of nutrition, creating growing demand for this staple.
- In the early 21st century about 250 million people were directly employed by the commercial fishing industry, and an estimated one billion people depended on fish as their primary source of animal protein.
- Commercial fishing is now carried on in all types of waters, in all parts of the world, except where impeded by depth or dangerous currents or prohibited by law.

# History of Commercial Fishing

Commercial fishing is fishing for commercial profit. It appeared in history when people were able to catch more fish and other sea animals that they were able to consume. They started selling them to the people that didn't fish. Although fish was sold since the ancient time, we today consider commercial fishing as a fishing of large amount of fish.

Humankind first started to catch fish and shellfish from the shallow waters of seas, lakes and streams. First fish was consumed without storing and before it spoils. But population grew and with it need for more fish and a way to store it for longer times. Fish was preserved by drying, smoking, salting, or fermentation and larger quantities of fish were caught with specialized equipment which appeared in time.

Earliest commercial fishing began in Middle Ages when herring were caught in huge numbers in northern Europe. Large fleets started to hunt whales in the Atlantic and in the South Pacific in 17th century. Sailing ships were used for commercial fishing until the steam ships appeared in the last quarter of the 19th century and took over. 20th century saw appearance of internal combustion engines which replaced steam engines (but not completely - last steam ships operated well into 1950s.) These internal combustion engines were placed at first on the smaller boats in the early 20th century to become, more or less, universally adopted with larger ships.

# Major Fishing Grounds of the World

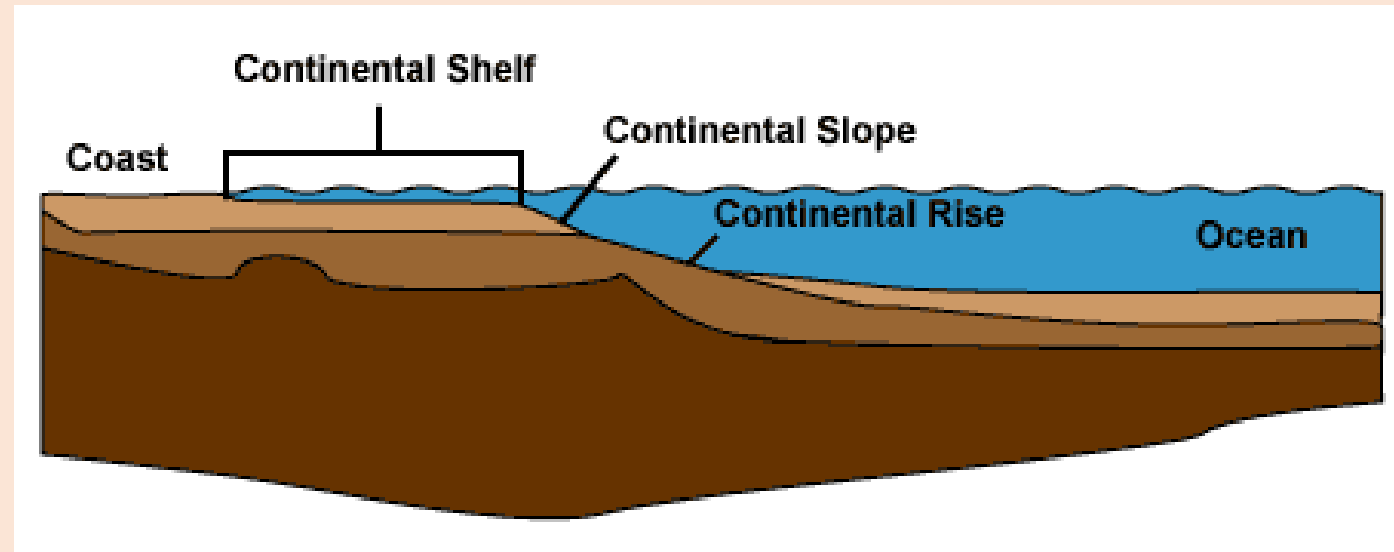
The major commercial fishing grounds are

***located in the cool waters of the northern hemisphere in comparatively high latitudes***

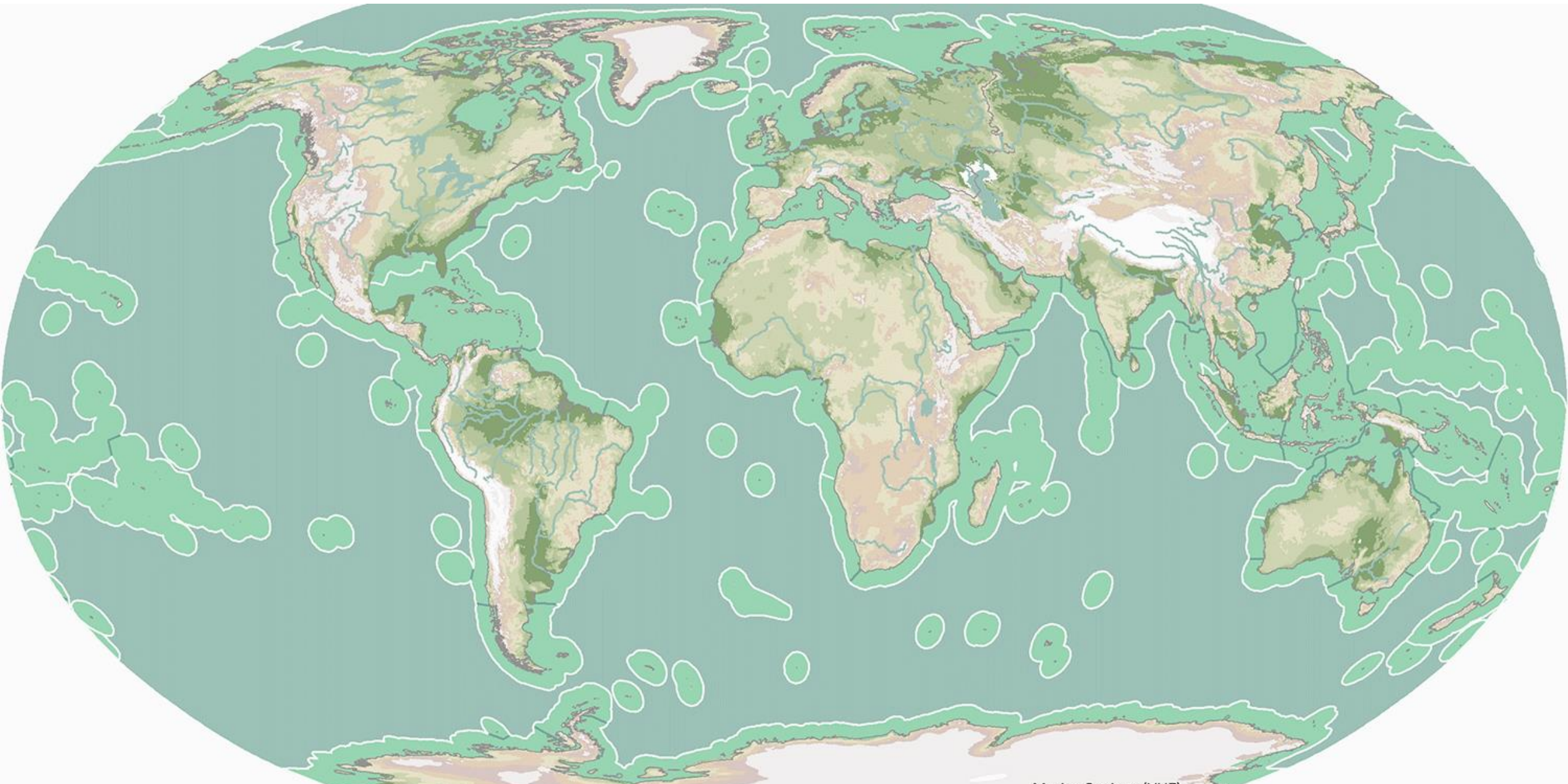
Commercial fishing is little developed in the tropics or in the southern hemisphere.

***The best fishing grounds are found above continental shelves which are not more than 200 meters below the water surface, where plankton of all kinds are most abundant.***

The world's most extensive continental shelves are located in high or midlatitudes in the northern hemisphere, e.g., the 'banks' off Newfoundland, the North Sea and the continental shelf off north-western Europe, and the Sea of Japan.



# World: Continental Shelves



## ***Geographical Factors Affecting Commercial Fishing***

- **Continental Shelves:** The shallower the water, the abundant is plankton available there. Plankton is the basic food of fish. The Doggar Bank in Northern Sea and Grand Bank in North Eastern USA are the shallower continental shelves.
- **Broken Coastal Lines:** It is observed that near the broken coastal lines, the speed of the water is slow which in turn reduces the speed of a fish, thus near the broken coastal lines, fish catching can be quite easy.
- **Cold & Warm Currents:** Ocean currents play a major role in the industry of fisheries as the world's best fishing ground is the Gulf Stream-warm water current.
- **Coastal Region Characteristics:** Rugged coastal land of Norway and Iceland make them good for fishing activities.
- **Climate:** Climate also plays a major role in maintaining the quality of Fish and its preservation.
- **Non-polluted Clean Water:** Industry wastes stunts fish growth therefore, one can say that non polluted water is an essential requirement for increased fish catching
- **Mangroves:** It has been found that mangroves serve as breeding grounds for fish, i.e. the greater the mangroves, the greater the plankton and the greater the fish.

- **Plankton** are in plentiful supply in polar waters, at the meeting of cold and warm ocean currents as on the Newfoundland 'banks' and the Sea of Japan, or where cold water from the ocean floor wells up to the surface as it does off the west coast of South America. The continental shelves of the tropics are relatively less rich in plankton because the water is warm.
- **Marine life is found to be best developed in oceans with a temperature lower than 20°C.** Both the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines of the middle and high latitudes in the northern hemisphere are very much indented and are backed by strong relief. There are sheltered inlets and estuarine coasts that make ideal sites for fishing ports and villages.

*More than half of the annual fish catch comes from the cold and temperate waters of the northern hemisphere. The Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans each account for about 40 per cent of the total, the Indian Ocean 4 per cent, while freshwater fishing amounts to about 15 per cent of the total.*

# Major Commercial Fishing Grounds of the World

## ➤ The North-West Pacific Region

- It stretches from the Bering Sea to East China Sea and the world's largest as well as greatest fishing ground.
- It extends southward from the outer Aleutian Islands in the north to the central Pacific, north of the Philippine Islands.
- The region has greatest asset is its fish in which Salmon, king crab, herring, halibut, Alaskan Pollock and cod are famous catches.
- Japan is at the top in commercial fishing of this region, followed by China, North and South Korea, and Russia

## ➤ The North East Atlantic and adjacent region of the Arctic

- It stretches from Iceland to Mediterranean shores that covered some of the European countries like Norway, Denmark, Spain, Iceland and the United Kingdom.
- It is a World's best fish-exporting region.

## ➤ The North West Atlantic

- It covers the Grand Bank and the Georges Bank area of the northwest Atlantic.
- This region is blessed with the convergence of the Gulf Stream and the Labrador Current that enhance the fishing productivity. The Cod, Halibut, tuna, squid, flounder, redfish, and salmon; herring and mackerel are famous fishes caught here.



### ➤ **The North East Pacific**

- It stretches from Alaska to California along the western shores of North America forms the fourth largest fishing area of the world.
- Salmon, tuna, halibut and sardines are found on the surface of this region.
- This region is famous for the world's best cod fishing ground along with herring and haddock.

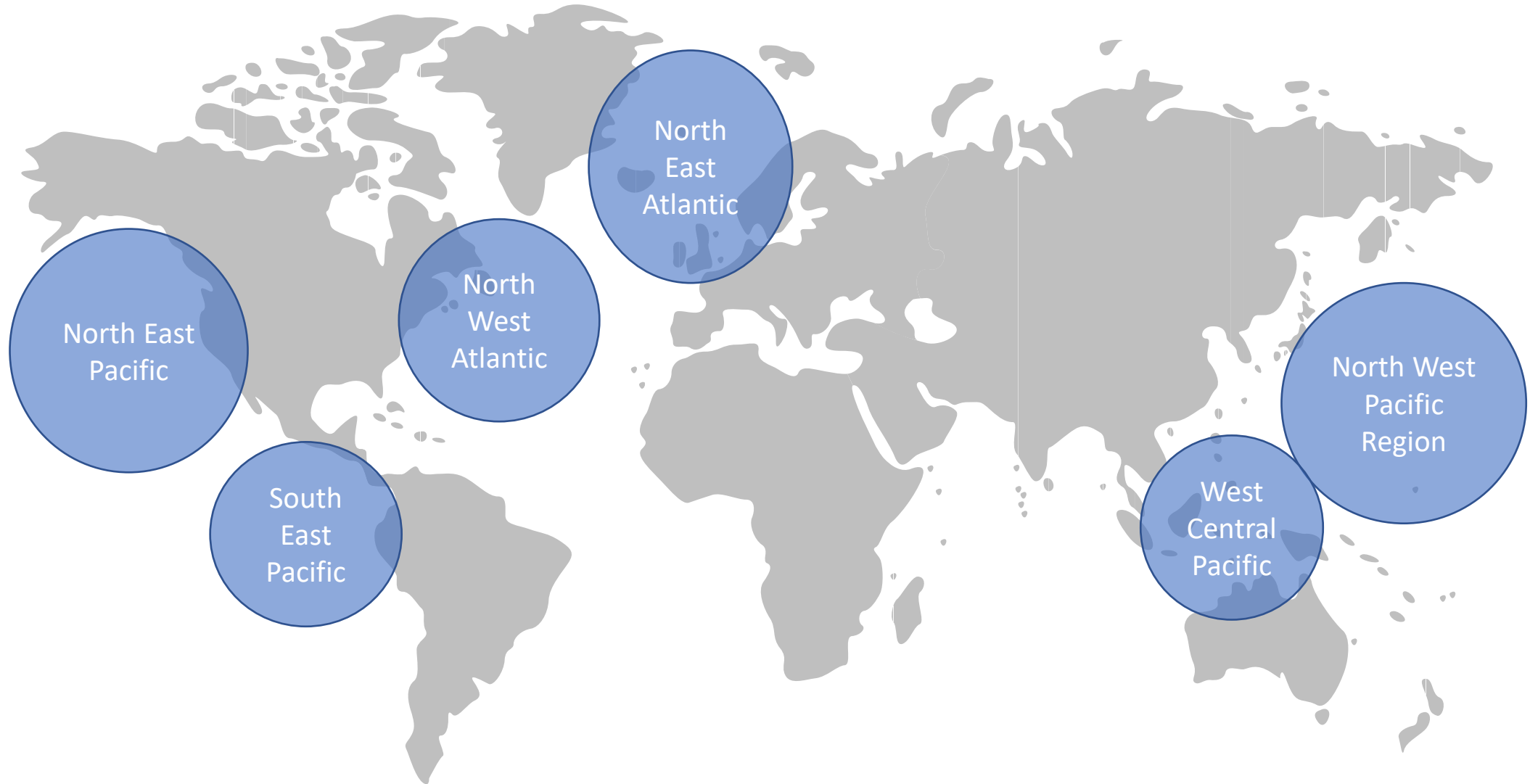
### ➤ **The South East Pacific**

- It stretches from Pacific Coast of South America that includes Panama to Cape Horn.
- The northward flowing Peru Current provides an ideal environment for the anchovy culture because it is associated with a coastal upwelling of nutrient rich colder water laden with plankton on which the anchovy feeds.

### ➤ **The West Central Pacific**

- It stretches from the Philippines and Southern Indonesia to the Australian coast.
- Redfish, bass, mullet, mackerel, oyster, crabs and tuna are famous fishes found in this region.
- These regions have been subjected to differential level of fisheries development because of the operation of factors such as:
  - (a) Market demand
  - (b) State of technical development, storage, transportation and refrigeration

# Major Fishing Grounds of the World



## **Assignment:**

Prepare a map correlating the ocean currents and the fishing grounds of the world.

## References

- <http://www.historyoffishing.com/fishing-history/history-of-commercial-fishing/#:~:text=Commercial%20fishing%20is%20fishing%20for,they%20were%20able%20to%20consume.&text=Earliest%20commercial%20fishing%20began%20in,huge%20numbers%20in%20northern%20Europe.>
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