In partnership with Ethic Ocean

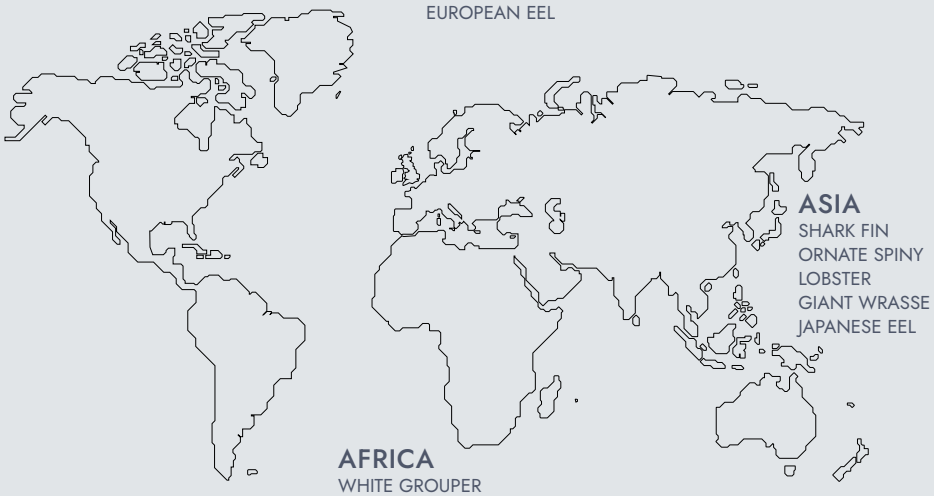
TAKE ACTION FOR MARINE BIODIVERSITY

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGENERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

RELAIS & CHATEAUX

The ocean connects us all. It covers more than 70% of the surface of our planet and contains most of the life on Earth. It is key to our economy — providing for the livelihoods of more than 40 million people —, contributes to the fight against global warming, and feeds more than 1 billion people around the world. With its health at a tipping point, the security of everything the ocean sustains is at risk. This is why Relais & Châteaux has pledged to contribute to the regeneration and development of marine ecosystems

THREATENED SPECIES BY REGION



NORTH AMERICA
BLUE SWIMMING CRAB
ORANGE ROUGHY
NORTH AMERICAN EEL

EUROPE
ATLANTIC SALMON
BROWN CRAB
EUROPEAN HAKE
ATLANTIC MACKEREL
EUROPEAN EEL

ASIA
SHARK FIN
ORNATE SPINY LOBSTER
GIANT WRASSE
JAPANESE EEL

AFRICA
WHITE GROUPER
BROWN GROUPER

SOUTH AMERICA
GOLIATH GROUPER
RED SPINY LOBSTER
(2X SPECIES)

OCEANIA
BLUE SWIMMING CRAB
ORANGE ROUGHY
AUSTRALIAN EEL

EUROPE

ATLANTIC SALMON

Salmo salar

FAO zones 21 and 27

Wild Atlantic salmon is an iconic species that is now critically endangered. Once abundant in Europe and North America, its populations have drastically declined due to several factors. Overfishing, particularly at sea and in estuaries, has significantly reduced their numbers. The destruction and fragmentation of their habitat through dam construction and urban development prevent their migration to spawning grounds. Climate change also disrupts their life cycle by altering water temperatures and food availability. Conservation efforts, such as habitat restoration, catch reduction, and reintroduction into certain rivers, are underway. Despite these initiatives, wild Atlantic salmon remains classified as a threatened species.

ATLANTIC MACKEREL

Scomber scombrus

FAO zone 27

Scomber scombrus is the most common mackerel species on the European market. For several years, catches have exceeded the level recommended by scientists, following disagreements between fishing countries over how to manage quotas.

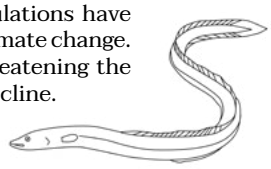
This species is under intense pressure from various countries: Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Great Britain, and those in the European Union.

It faces chronic overexploitation, which has worsened over the past five years.

EUROPEAN EEL

Anguilla anguilla

The European eel is native to European rivers and coastal waters. It has a complex life cycle, migrating thousands of kilometers from European freshwater habitats to the Sargasso Sea to spawn. Over the past decades, European eelpopulations have dramatically declined due to overfishing, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Dams and hydroelectric plants obstruct migration routes, further threatening the species. Illegal fishing and trafficking also contribute to population decline.



BROWN CRAB

Cancer pagurus

FAO subzones 27.4, 27.7 and 27.8

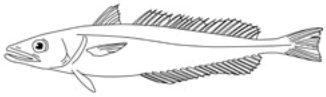
Brown crab is considered a staple of seafood platters, but it is becoming increasingly rare. Landings have drastically declined since 2018. While 5,000 to 6,000 tons of brown crab were fished annually in the 2010s, fewer than 1,600 tons were landed in 2022 — a fourfold drop.
The causes of the decline are not well understood: adults are affected by diseases, juveniles by parasites, and larvae by warming waters. The sharp drop in catches is not enough to restore biomass. All stocks are degraded and overfished in the Bay of Biscay, the English Channel, the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland and the North Sea.

EUROPEAN HAKE

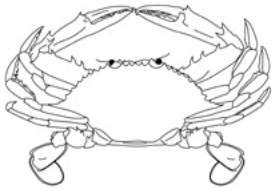
Merluccius merluccius

FAO zone 37

A species prized for its tender flesh, European hake is found in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The hake population in the Mediterranean, targeted by both artisanal and industrial fisheries, has been severely overexploited in recent years and is now collapsed. Overfishing has caused a worrying drop in stocks, particularly due to the excessive capture of juveniles, which prevents the natural renewal of populations. Furthermore, the destruction of seabeds by certain fishing methods affects their habitat. Climate change, by altering water temperature and oxygen levels, also impacts its distribution and life cycle.



NORTH AMERICA & OCEANIA



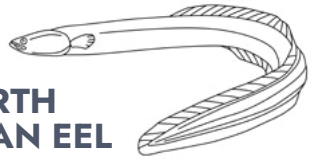
BLUE SWIMMING CRAB

Portunus pelagicus

FAO zones 51, 57 and 71

The blue swimming crab is a highly valued species found in the Indo-Pacific region, playing a crucial role in both marine ecosystems and commercial fisheries. Due to its high demand in global seafood markets, its populations have faced significant pressure from overfishing.

Many crabs are caught before reaching maturity, reducing their ability to reproduce and sustain the population. Destructive fishing practices further threaten the species. Additionally, habitat degradation caused by coastal development, pollution, and climate change impacts such as rising sea temperatures and ocean acidification affect their breeding and growth cycles. Despite some conservation measures in some countries, illegal fishing continues to pose risks.



THE NORTH AMERICAN EEL

Anguilla rostrata

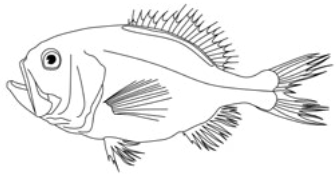
Anguilla rostrata is a migratory species found in North America, from Greenland to Venezuela. It spawns in the Sargasso Sea, and its complex life cycle makes it vulnerable to various threats. Key sustainability challenges include overfishing of glass eels *(fry)* for export, a declining population, habitat fragmentation due to dams blocking migration routes, pollution affecting growth and reproduction, and illegal trade driven by high demand.

ORANGE ROUGHY

Hoplostethus atlanticus

All FAO zones

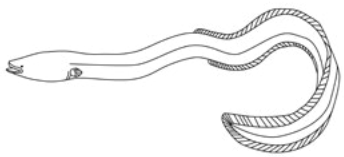
The orange roughy populations have been severely depleted due to overfishing. They are particularly vulnerable because they grow slowly, reach sexual maturity late *(around 20-30 years)* and can live for over 100 years. These traits mean that once overfished, populations take decades to recover, if at all. Industrial deep-sea trawling, the primary method of capture, is especially destructive, not only depleting stocks rapidly but also damaging fragile deep-sea ecosystems like coral and sponge beds. Despite improved monitoring efforts, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a concern.

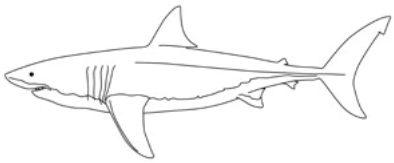


THE AUSTRALIAN EEL

Anguilla australis

The Australian eel is found in freshwater rivers, lakes, and estuaries of Australia, New Zealand, and surrounding islands. It migrates to the ocean to spawn, though its exact breeding grounds remain unknown. This species faces threats from habitat destruction, pollution, and barriers such as dams, which disrupt migration. Overfishing, especially for the international eel trade, also puts pressure on populations. While not as critically endangered as the European eel, the Australian eel is declining.



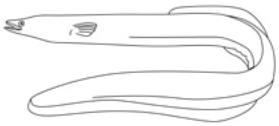


ASIA

SHARK FIN

All oceans

Shark fins generally are highly sought after on the global market, particularly for the preparation of shark fin soup, a dish considered a symbol of prestige in certain Asian cultures. This massive demand fuels intensive fishing, which has devastating consequences for pelagic shark populations. Every year, tens of millions of sharks are captured, often solely for their fins, in a practice known as *"shark finning."* This involves cutting off the fins and discarding the rest of the body back into the sea, leading to a slow and cruel death for the animals. This exploitation poses a serious threat to sharks, many of which are top predators in the food chain. Their decline disrupts the balance of marine ecosystems, causing cascading effects on biodiversity. Numerous species, such as the hammerhead shark and the whale shark, are now critically endangered. Alternatives to shark fin soup would help reduce pressure on these essential ocean predators.



JAPANESE EEL

Anguilla japonica

The Japanese eel is a migratory species native to East Asia, found mainly in Japan, China, Korea, and Taiwan. It has a complex life cycle, hatching in the Philippine Sea before migrating to freshwater rivers to grow. Highly valued in cuisine, particularly for *"unagi"* in Japan, it faces intense fishing pressure that threatens its populations.

Listed as endangered by the IUCN, the Japanese eel's numbers are declining due to overfishing, poaching, and habitat destruction caused by pollution and dams. Additionally, its farming relies on capturing wild glass eels *(fry)*, preventing sustainable management.

GIANT WRASSE

Cheilinus undulatus

FAO zones 51, 57 and 71

The Giant wrasse, also known as the Napoleon wrasse, is an iconic fish of Indo-Pacific coral reefs. It plays a crucial role in maintaining marine ecosystem balance by regulating invertebrate populations. However, it is threatened by overfishing, particularly in China, where it is highly valued as a luxury delicacy. Its trade is largely driven by illegal fishing, fueled by strong demand from high-end restaurants and the aquarium industry. Although classified as endangered by the IUCN and protected under CITES, poaching remains rampant, making conservation efforts challenging. The species is on the second level of China's list of State Key Protected Wild Animals.

ORNATE SPINY LOBSTER

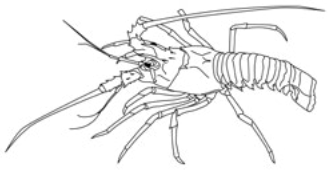
Panulirus ornatus

FAO zones 51, 57 and 71

The ornate spiny lobster is a species of decapod crustacean that primarily inhabits the tropical waters of the Indo-Pacific Ocean. It is on the second level of China's list of State Key Protected Wild Animals. This lobster is highly valued for its delicious meat, making it a prime target for both commercial and artisanal fishing.

However, its exploitation raises significant sustainability concerns. High demand in international markets is placing increasing pressure on wild populations, threatening their natural balance. Overexploitation, combined with the destruction of coastal habitats such as coral reefs and mangroves, further weakens the species. Additionally, illegal and unregulated fishing exacerbates the situation by preventing effective stock management.

SOUTH AMERICA



RED SPINY LOBSTER/ BRAZILIAN SPINY LOBSTER

Panulirus laevicauda

FAO zones 31 and 41

Panulirus laevicauda is a spiny lobster species found mainly in the tropical Western Atlantic, from Florida to Brazil. It is distinguished by its yellow-brown coloration, often speckled with dark spots. This lobster inhabits rocky and coral areas. Highly valued for its delicate meat, it is intensively harvested, particularly in Brazil, where it represents a significant economic resource. However, excessive fishing pressure, the use of non-selective fishing techniques, and habitat degradation are endangering its populations. To ensure sustainability, measures such as closure seasons, regulating catches, establishing protected areas, and promoting responsible fishing are essential. Raising awareness among fishers and consumers is also a key lever for preserving this species.

Avoid serving this species from February to April each year.

RED SPINY LOBSTER/ CARIBBEAN SPINY LOBSTER

Panulirus argus

FAO zones 31 and 41

Panulirus argus is a spiny lobster species widely located in the tropical waters of the Western Atlantic, from the southern tip of the United States down to Brazil. It is a major economic resource for both artisanal and industrial fisheries, particularly in Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Florida, and the Bahamas. However, overexploitation threatens its populations due to high international demand. Sustainability challenges include implementing closure seasons, quotas, protecting breeding habitats, and improving fishing practices to prevent the capture of juveniles and seeded females. Aquaculture and community-based management initiatives are also being explored to ensure the long-term viability of this resource.

Avoid serving this species from February to April each year.

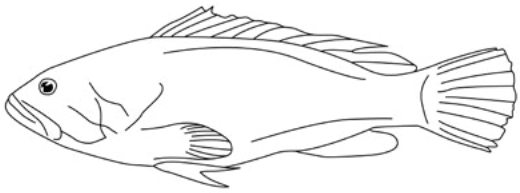
GOLIATH GROUPER

Epinephelus itajara

FAO zones 21, 31 and 41

The Goliath grouper is one of the largest reef fish in the Atlantic Ocean, found primarily in the coastal waters of the southeastern United States, the Caribbean, and Northern coast of South America. Once abundant, its population suffered a severe decline due to overfishing, particularly in the mid-to-late 20th century. The species is slow-growing, late-maturing, and forms spawning aggregations, making it highly vulnerable to exploitation. Strict conservation measures, including fishing bans in the U.S. and parts of the Caribbean and Brazil, have helped some populations to show signs of recovery. However, illegal fishing and accidental bycatch continue to pose threats.

AFRICA



WHITE GROUPER

Epinephelus aeneus

FAO zones 27, 34 and 37

The white grouper is a demersal fish found mainly in the Mediterranean Sea and the Eastern Atlantic, from Portugal to Senegal. This species, prized for its flavorful flesh, plays a key role in maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems as a predator. However, it faces numerous threats linked to overfishing and the degradation of coastal habitats. Its slow growth and late sexual maturity make the white grouper particularly vulnerable to overexploitation. Excessive fishing has led to a worrying decline in its populations. Preserving the white grouper is crucial for maintaining marine biodiversity and ensuring the sustainability of the fisheries that depend on it.

BROWN GROUPER

Epinephelus gigas
or Epinephelus marginatus

FAO zones 27, 34 and 37

The brown grouper is an iconic species found mainly in rocky seabeds in the Mediterranean Sea and the Eastern Atlantic, from Portugal to South Africa. This predator plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems, but it is seriously threatened by overfishing and habitat degradation. Its unique life cycle — characterized by slow growth and sequential hermaphroditism *(it is born female and becomes male later in life)* —makes it especially vulnerable to exploitation. Intensive fishing has led to an alarming decline in its populations.