

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance



The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance's mission is to restore and enhance an enduring marine system supporting a healthy diversity and an abundance of marine life and human uses through a self-organizing and self-governing organization. For the past decade, we have set the standard for effective collaboration in the pursuit of one question: if we truly care about the health of our oceans does it matter how, where and when we fish; and, who catches the fish that end up on our dinner plates?



Toxic Pollution & Fisheries

Environmental pollutants comprise one of the major hurdles the marine food web is facing today.

Contaminants that accumulate in wildlife, including fish, cause health problems for them and for humans and other animals who eat them. Reproductive and developmental problems, behavioral problems, diseases, and cancers have all been linked to chemical pollutants. Marine mammals, birds and fish may be even more sensitive than humans to low concentrations of these pollutants.

Persistent and bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs) may have entered

the marine environment long ago, and others are still being added, primarily from human activities on land (often called land based sources of marine pollution). They include pesticides, cleaning substances, industrial lubricants, and other manufactured chemicals as well as byproducts of combustion.

These industrial substances are released by producers, users, and storage or disposal sites, and they permeate the environment via ground and surface water flow, air currents, and ocean currents. They may end up far from their origin in both space and time.

Marine life becomes contaminated as they ingest and absorb these substances in the water, sediments, and surface meniscus. Top predators, including humans, get the largest doses as accumulation magnifies concentrations through the food chain. Similarly, scientific evidence of a connection between the health of marine animals and toxic pollutants has continued to accumulate over time.

But there is a way to clean up this toxic soup and protect the marine ecosystem from PBTs and other pollutants.

For more information please visit www.namanet.org

What we want:

- As fishermen work to do their part in restoring fish populations, it's important to ensure that all other hurdles threatening marine wildlife are also identified and removed. Environmental pollutants comprise one of the major hurdles the marine food web is facing today.
- Fishery managers currently assess fish populations based primarily on the impact of fishing practices. This ignores non-fishing impacts such as persistent pollutants, climate change, and predator species which we know are critical toward fostering a healthy ecosystem.
- We want policy makers to stop ignoring non-fishing impacts and embrace a holistic ecosystem management approach that factors in the variety of forces impacting fish populations. Just like it takes a village to raise a child it takes an ecosystem to raise a fish.



How we are achieving this:

- NAMA works through collaborative networks such as the Coming Clean Collaborative, which unites over 200 organizations in the struggle to reform the chemical and fossil fuels industry so that it is no longer a source of harm to our health and the environment. NAMA ensures that fisheries, the health of the ocean, and coastal communities are well represented in the national discussion.
- NAMA seeks to transform policies and decision-making processes regarding chemicals, so that the impact of persistent, bioaccumulative toxins on sealife is adequately acknowledged and addressed in programs for rebuilding fish populations and in marine conservation plans.

What can you do?

- Fight chemical pollution wherever you live; it all ends up in the sea. The culprits are: industrial processes and products, sewage treatment outfalls, manufactured fertilizers, agricultural pesticides, household cleaners, lawn care, power plants, automobiles, oil.
- Eat various fish and seafood species.
- Follow fish advisories warnings to limit intake of certain fish because they contain high levels of certain chemicals.