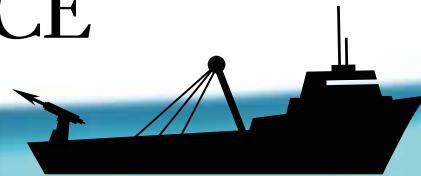
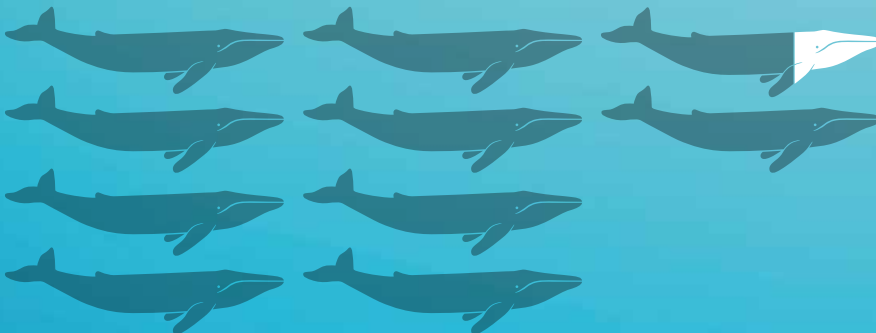


# THE OCEANS ARE LOSING THEIR BALANCE



**-97 %**

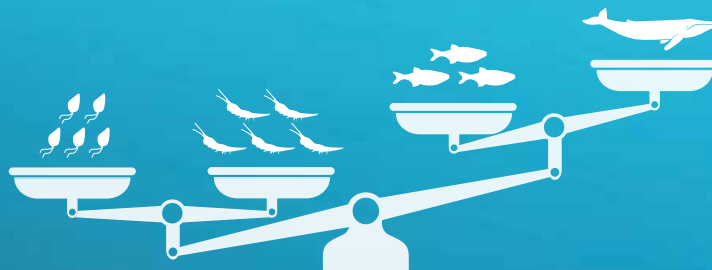


In 1850, the oceans were home to some 340,000 blue whales. Today, this figure has fallen to just 10,000 – a reduction of 97 percent.

Before the onset of industrial fishing and whaling, life in the oceans was balanced. Each weight class of organism accounted for approximately the same biomass – a billion metric tons. This was because the smaller, lighter organisms were correspondingly more numerous. For example, when the industrial exploitation of the seas began in 1850, the mass of all fish in the oceans weighing between 10 and 100 kilograms was the same as the combined mass of marine plankton weighing between ten and 100 millionths of a gram. This equilibrium no longer exists today.

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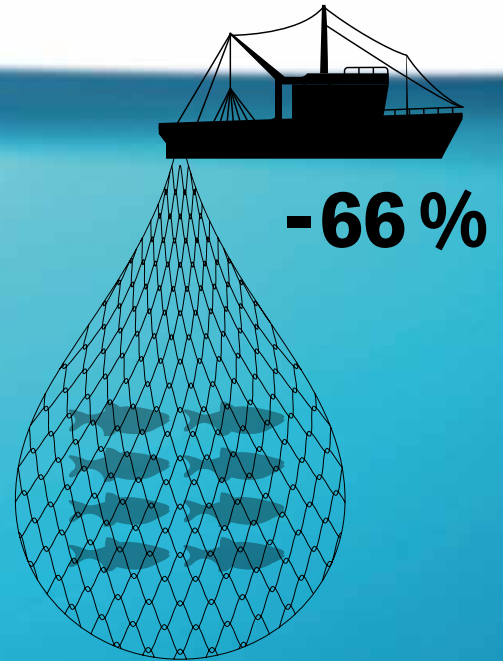
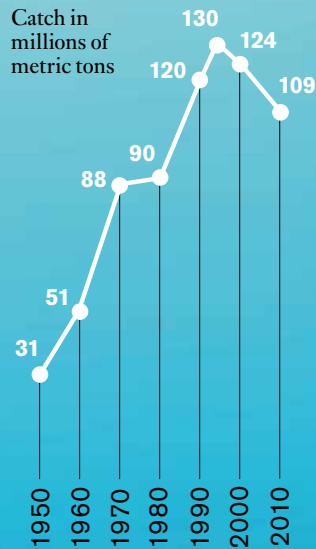
**TODAY**



**IN 1850**



GRAPHIC: GCO, ILLUSTRATION: VALERIA DUMLER, ICONS: ISTOCK



The seas are getting emptier: since 1850, there has been a 66 percent reduction in the mass of commercially exploitable fish (> 10 grams, 0 – 200 meters' depth). The fishing industry reached its peak in 1996 with an annual catch of 130 million metric tons of fish. Since then, catches have been decreasing steadily despite ever increasing efforts by the industry.

