



FAN ITACH CHUUK

A GUIDE TO
**BIGGER,
BETTER
CATCHES**

FISH SMART. FISH FOREVER.



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When we start talking about fisheries management in Chuuk, here are the kinds of responses we hear most often.

What's the problem?

WE CAN
NEVER RUN
OUT OF FISH,
THE OCEAN IS
BIG.

WHAT ARE
WE SUPPOSED
TO LIVE ON?
DO YOU HAVE
ALTERNATIVES?

HOW DO YOU
KNOW THEY ARE
LESS? DO YOU GO
UNDERNEATH THE
WATER & COUNT THE
FISH?

GOD GAVE US
THESE FISH,
WE SHOULD
EAT THEM.



But if you ask people how their catches have changed over the years, here is what you find.



It's also taking us more time and costing us more money to catch fish than it did in the past.

What's the problem?

1980



2000

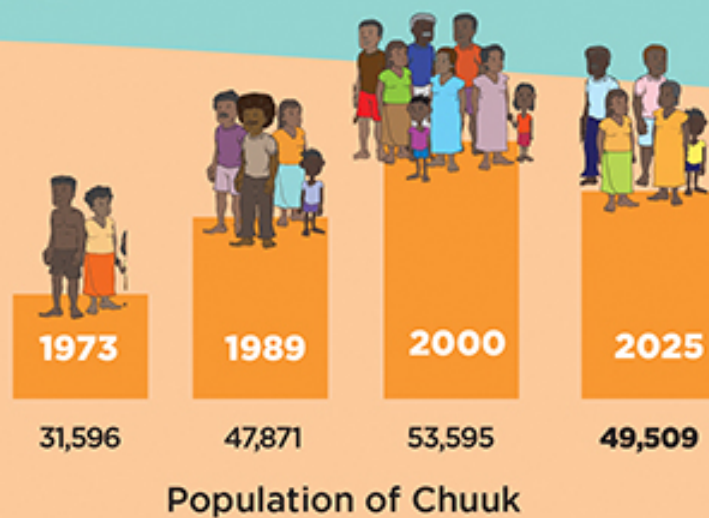


2020



So why has fishing changed so much?

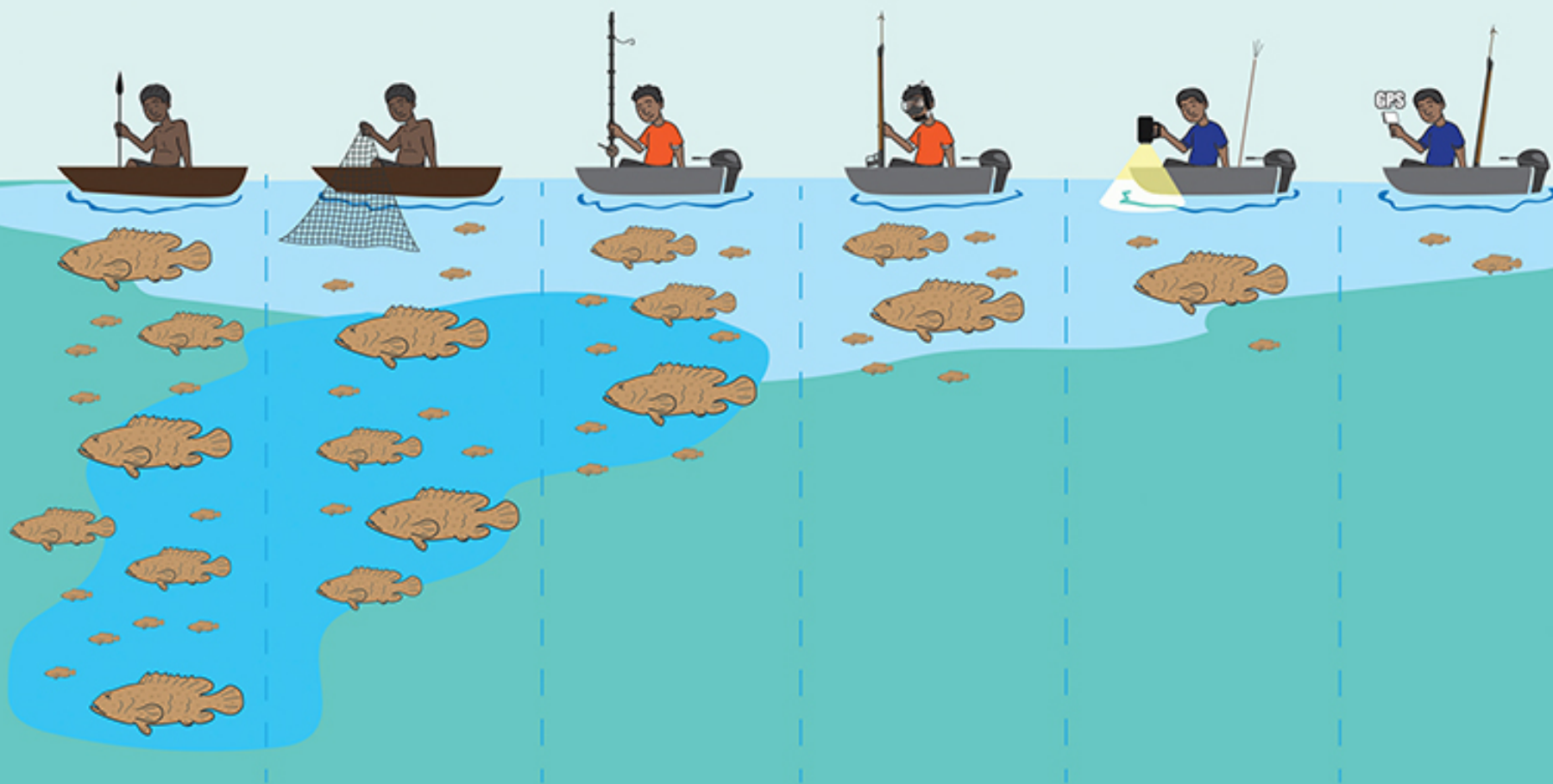
We are fishing more than ever, because we have more mouths to feed and we have more needs today than ever before.



What's changed?

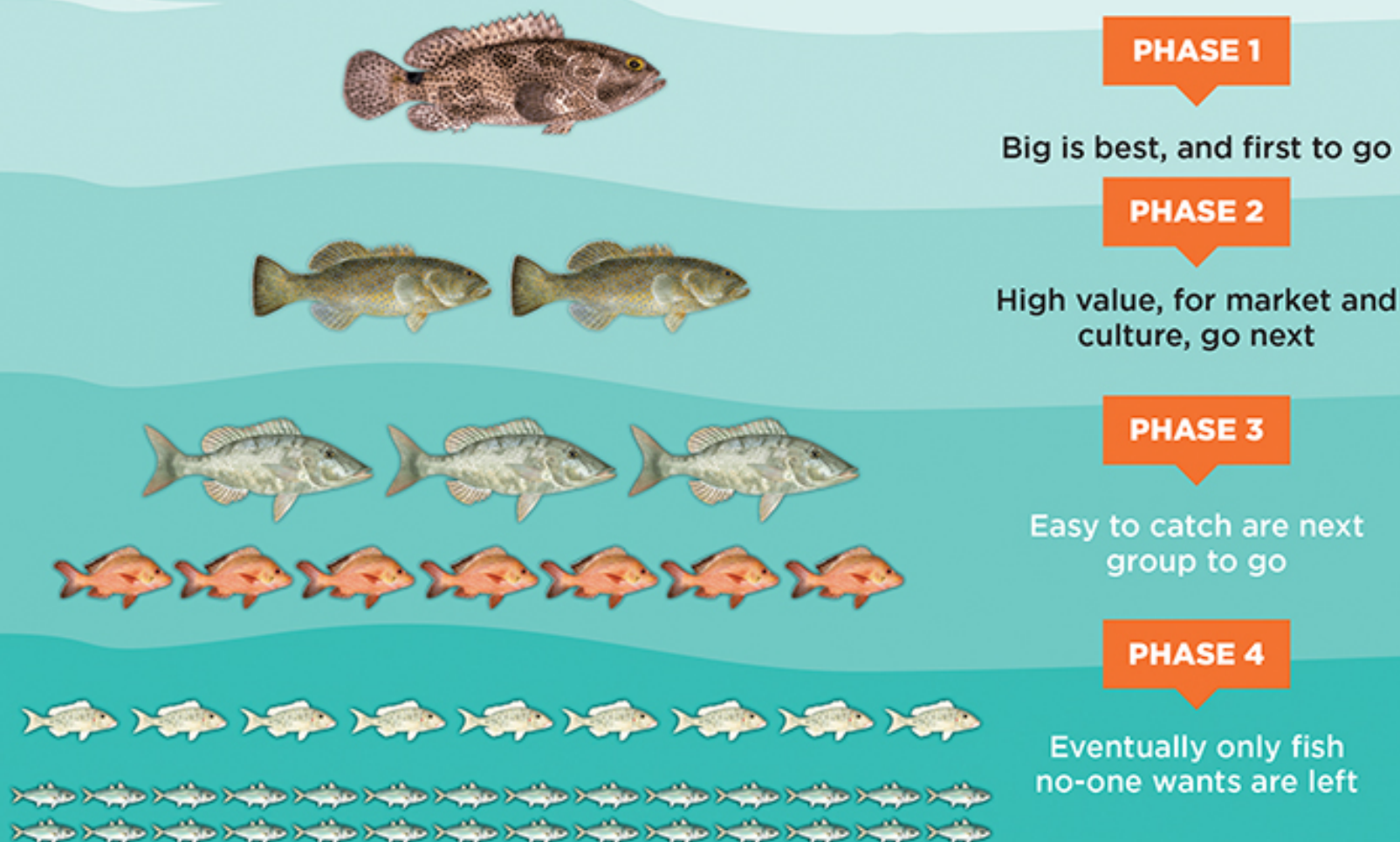
**BUT AS OUR ABILITY TO SELL FISH HAS IMPROVED,
SO HAS OUR FISHING GEAR, ALLOWING US TO CATCH MORE
FISH THAN EVER BEFORE, LEAVING VERY FEW BEHIND.**

What's changed?



Overfishing typically happens in the same way everywhere.

First, the biggest, most valuable fish, disappear.
Then it goes right down the food chain.



**YOU CAN FIGURE OUT HOW OVERFISHED YOUR FISHING GROUNDS
ARE BY LOOKING AT WHAT YOU ARE CATCHING TODAY.**

How far you are down the food chain tells you how much you have lost.

*SO, WHAT'S
FOR
DINNER?*

THESE?

How do we know?



Fish illustrations reproduced with permission of the Pacific Community (SPC) and cChange

ARE YOU STILL CATCHING THE BIG FISH?

Or are you further down the food chain?

THESE?

THESE?

OR
THIS?

How do we know?

SO WHAT'S THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND WHAT CAN WE DO?

We are allowing too few fish to get big enough to breed and restock the reef.

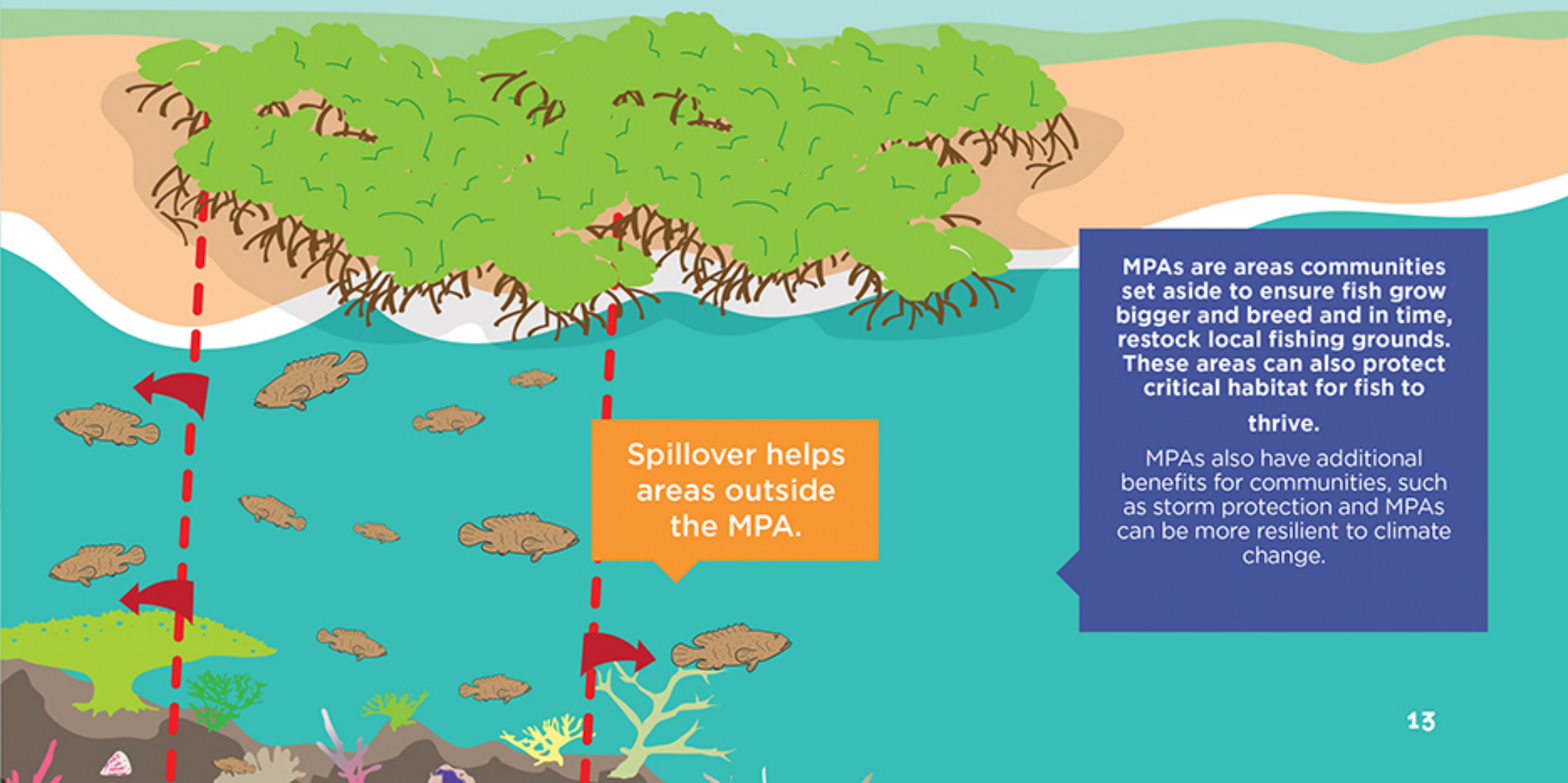
This is what overfishing means.

If we catch our fish before they get big enough to breed, they can't restock the reefs. So each year, we have less fish to catch.

If we wait till they get big enough to restock our fishing grounds each year, we ensure we have good catches year after year. We also get bigger fish.

**LET THEM
BREED. EAT
MORE LATER!**

Working with Government, NGOs and experts, Chuuk communities have taken additional steps, working to rebuild stocks using local management tools like community-based Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).



Spillover helps
areas outside
the MPA.

MPAs are areas communities set aside to ensure fish grow bigger and breed and in time, restock local fishing grounds. These areas can also protect critical habitat for fish to thrive.

MPAs also have additional benefits for communities, such as storm protection and MPAs can be more resilient to climate change.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

In addition to MPAs, there is a number of effective management actions, for both communities and governments, to help ensure your fish get big enough to breed and restock your reef. MPAs are just one tool.

1

The fisheries department supports communities to farm fish to provide food security/alternative income.

2

Establish MPAs help create space for fish to grow and breed each year. The fish in the MPA area help restock all the fishing grounds. MPA areas can also be placed on important habitat that fish need.

But please note small MPAs will not fully protect fish that swim over large areas.

MPA

3

Establish size limits to ensure fish reach Set Sizes and restock your fishing grounds.

You can also use bigger hooks and bigger mesh size in nets, to ensure the little ones get a chance to grow before you catch them.

4

Ban harmful gear that leaves too few fish behind.

Poison root fishing, night diving & scuba spearfishing are examples of practices places have banned. Small net sizes, too, particularly in fish nursery grounds.

5

Fish Aggregation Devices

are used to attract deep water fish to one location, to make it easier to catch them. FADs are used to reduce fishing pressure on more overfished inshore areas.

Toolbox

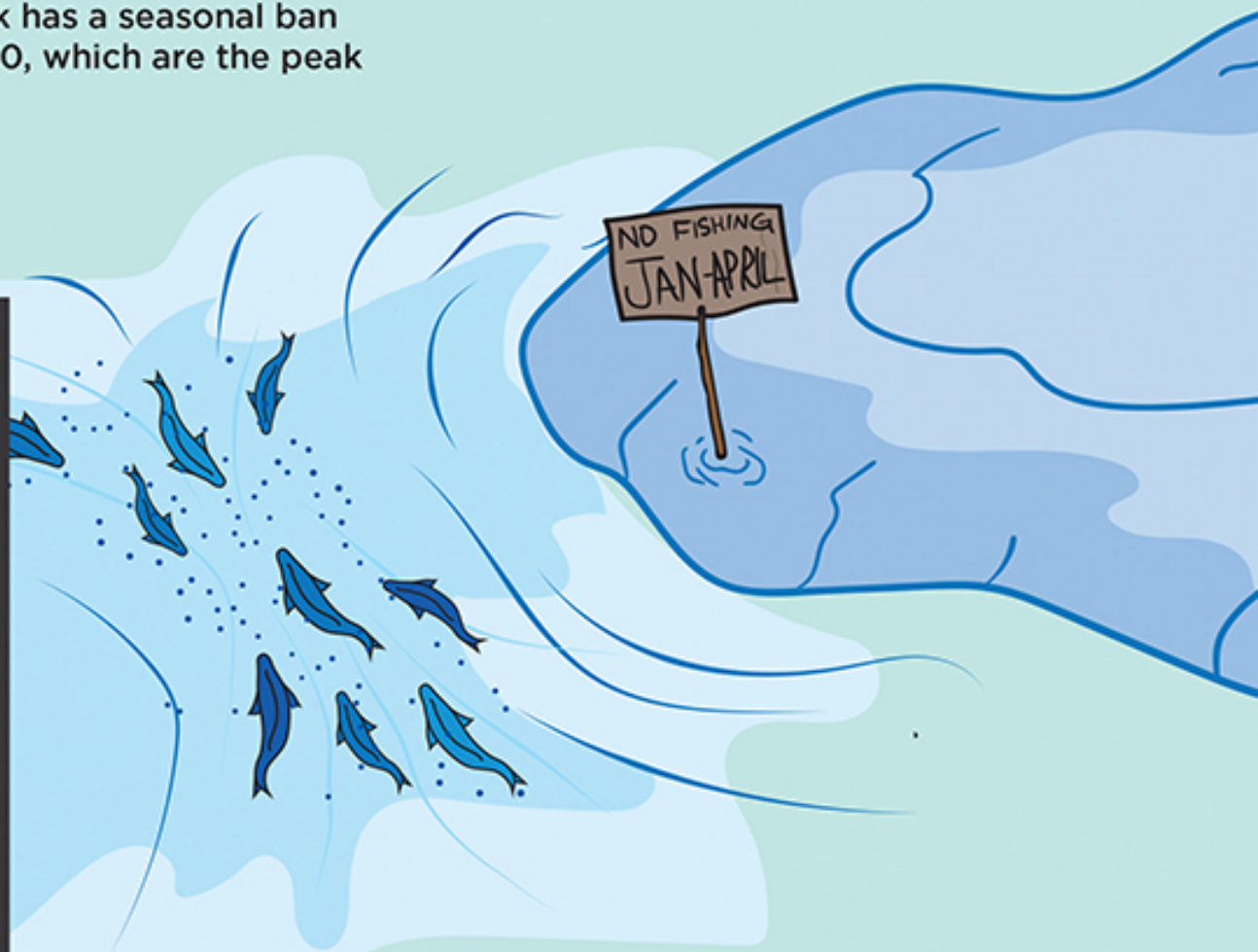
6

Create bans to protect key breeding sites or breeding seasons

By ensuring fish have space to breed, you increase your chances for sustainable catches.

At the state level, the Government has also taken actions to revive at risk fisheries in Chuuk. To that end, Chuuk has a seasonal ban on fishing grouper from January 1 to April 30, which are the peak breeding months for these fish.

MOST COMMON GROUPERS IN CHUUK



Grouper are more vulnerable to overfishing because they gather in the same places at the same times every year to breed, making it easy to fish out breeding stock.

The ban, which runs from January 1 to April 30, is intended to let them breed each year so we catch more later.

WHY DO THESE FISH NEED SPECIAL PROTECTION?

Grouper are highly vulnerable to overfishing because they gather in the same places and at the same time every year to breed. That means in short period of time all those breeding fish can be fished out.

In the old days, when there was less fishing, fishing these sites made it easy to catch fish. But with more fishers today, with more advanced fishing gear we are leaving too few fish behind to breed.

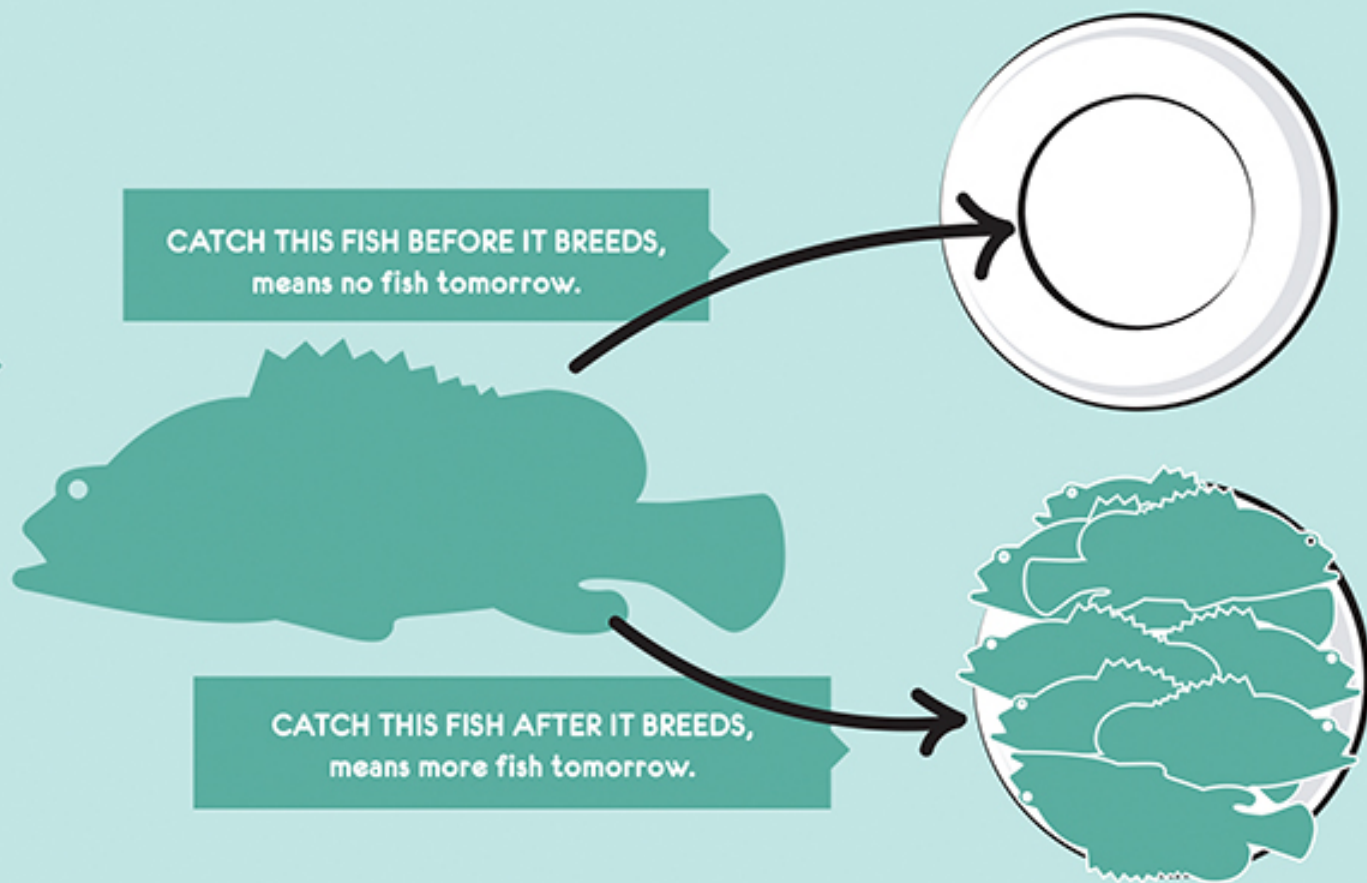


Photo courtesy of Paul McKenzie

LET THEM BREED

The good news is while grouper gather in large numbers a few times a year to breed which makes them vulnerable, it also makes them easy to help revive: **Let Them Breed, Have More Later. It's that easy.**

IT'S SIMPLE
MATH



FAN ITACH CHUUK is asking everyone to come together and pledge to not catching, eating and selling grouper during its peak breeding months.

1

MAKE THE FAN ITACH CHUUK PLEDGE

Personally pledge to Say No to grouper January through April each year.

Let Them Breed.
Have More Later.



2

SPREAD THE WORD

Tell your family and friends about the problem and encourage them to make the Fan Itach Chuuk Pledge.

3

We encourage you to visit our office or one of our events to make your pledge and have your photograph taken with the Fan Itach Chuuk fish board. We will post it on Facebook. Then you can share the post and share the Fan Itach Chuuk story with your friends and family.

About the Campaign



A CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT OUR WAY OF LIFE

Across Chuuk, fish are getting smaller and smaller, and fishing is getting harder and harder. That means people are having a harder time meeting their food and income needs. And one of the most vulnerable fish is grouper.

The **Fan Itach Chuuk** campaign is a movement to revive grouper fisheries, so we can better meet our needs today and tomorrow. That means pledging to avoid grouper during their peak breeding months, January through April. For this to work and succeed, it will take all of us.

The campaign name, **Fan Itach Chuuk**, is intended to capture the need of each and every one of us to step up and together meet our responsibilities to our island history and our traditions by better managing the ocean's gifts that support us. Together, we can ensure we have more and bigger fish, and can sustain our Chuukese way of life.

To learn more visit facebook.com/fanitachchuuk

