



Want a job that is active and interesting? A job that helps to feed families and communities?

Then working in fisheries is for you.

A fishery* is not just about fish. Of course, the fish are most important but there are fishers who catch them, people who process and market the catch and fisheries managers who ensure that fish stocks remain healthy.

Fisheries work is exciting – it can involve inside and outside work depending on your preferences. Some people work at sea and some work in markets and some work on computers. But the work is always varied and interesting. The different types of jobs are discussed under the headings in the above figure.



Management

All fisheries resources need to be managed to ensure that fisheries remain sustainable – that is, they remain capable of providing food forever. Biological and economic data on the resource and the activities of fishers are collected by fisheries scientists, statisticians and economists. These professionals provide information on the status of fisheries resources and suggest policies for development and management.

Fisheries management jobs are available not only with government fisheries authorities but with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Both of these often work with fishing communities which have much traditional knowledge of fish stocks and the environment.*

Jobs with fisheries authorities are often an exciting mixture of work in the field, the laboratory and the office and usually require university qualifications.

Fishing

Fishers are the people most directly involved in a fishery – both men and women who work on shorelines and at sea on vessels ranging from canoes to large tuna vessels. Any position of responsibility on a larger vessel requires sea-going qualifications.

In more technical fisheries, fishing gear technologists design and build fishing gear and experiment with new methods of catching fish. Some fishing operations, particularly those offshore, are dependent on boat builders providing sound fishing vessels. Trade qualifications are usually required to work with a boat builder.

Young fishers often learn their trade informally from older, more established, fishers. There are, however, training opportunities in many Pacific Island countries – skills in navigation and sea safety are also required. SPC is also involved in fishers training.

Processing

The catch landed by fishers is usually processed – which may range from the simple storage of fish on ice to the technologically more complicated procedures of freezing and canning. In some islands, many people are employed as unskilled or semi-skilled labour in tuna processors and canneries.

Seafood technologists, usually with university training in chemistry, biochemistry or bacteriology, ensure the quality of seafood and work on the development of new products. The development of value-added products, such as smoked fish, is one way of increasing the value of the catch.

Marketing

Marketing may refer to the sale of fish from a local market but, in the case of exported seafood, involves securing overseas sales and transporting the catch to foreign countries. Young people intending to work in this area may require qualifications in small business management and accounting.

Related activities

Other marine activities include aquaculture, sports fishing and ecotourism.

Aquaculture operations, including prawn, fish and pearl farms, require biologists, technicians, engineers and divers as well as marketing and sales specialists.

Tourism-related activities include working on charter fishing vessels, acting as fishing guides and being part of recreational dive and snorkel tour operations.

Training

Fisheries careers are varied and stimulating. They often involve practical skills, such as seamanship and diving, as well as intellectual skills, such as analysing data with computers; perhaps it is this mixture of active, open-air tasks and stimulating office or laboratory work, that makes fisheries work so interesting.

Some careers involve university study while others can be pursued after intensive practical training. Fisheries and marine environmental courses are available at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and at universities in Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia.

Whichever career in fisheries is decided upon, the student can look forward to entering a life of stimulation and adventure, working with other qualified and highly-motivated individuals surveying, developing, managing and conserving marine resources for the benefit of current and future generations of Pacific Island people.

