



Above: A Chinese Squid Jigger photographed near the Galapagos Islands by an Ecuadorian Navy aircraft in 2020, featured in a Reuters news article from 2020.

FANTASTIC FISHING FLEETS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Investigating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing by the Chinese Deepwater Fishing Fleet in and around the Exclusive Economic Zones of Ecuador, Peru, and Chile in the late 2010s.

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What is all this?

- Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) is one of the largest forms of crime today
- China has the world’s largest Deepwater Fishing Fleet (DWF)--17,000 ships compared to the 300 ships of the US or EU--and is ranked as the most IUU prone fleet
- IUU causes human rights abuses, environmental destruction, and threatens peoples’ livelihoods
- IUU by China violates international law and the sovereignty of affected countries



Left: A 2020 image of a Chinese fishing boat, seen from the periscope of Chilean Submarine "Simpson" (Chilean Navy)

Abstract

Starting in roughly 2018, a huge fleet of hundreds of Chinese fishing vessels, complete with tankers, refrigerator ships, and any other vessel needed to keep fishing boats operational for months on end appeared by the Galapagos Islands, cruising between those islands and northern Chile in search of Jumbo Squid. Chinese fishing boats have a long history of causing mischief, most notably in the South China Sea, but their activities have a global range. IUU by the Chinese DWF is most studied in the South China Sea, and significantly less studied in South America. The goal of this IS is to help fill the gap in literature on this topic. By creating historical case studies of three of the Latin American countries most affected by Chinese IUU we can better understand the consequences of leaving IUU unchecked and explore how states are able to resolve problems with larger states without violence. Each of the countries that are studied used a different strategy to combat IUU, and each country had a different level of success. Ultimately, the evidence shows that Ecuador’s strategy of bilateral diplomacy backed by shows of resolve is the best way to resolve fisheries disputes in the 21st century.

What have we learned?

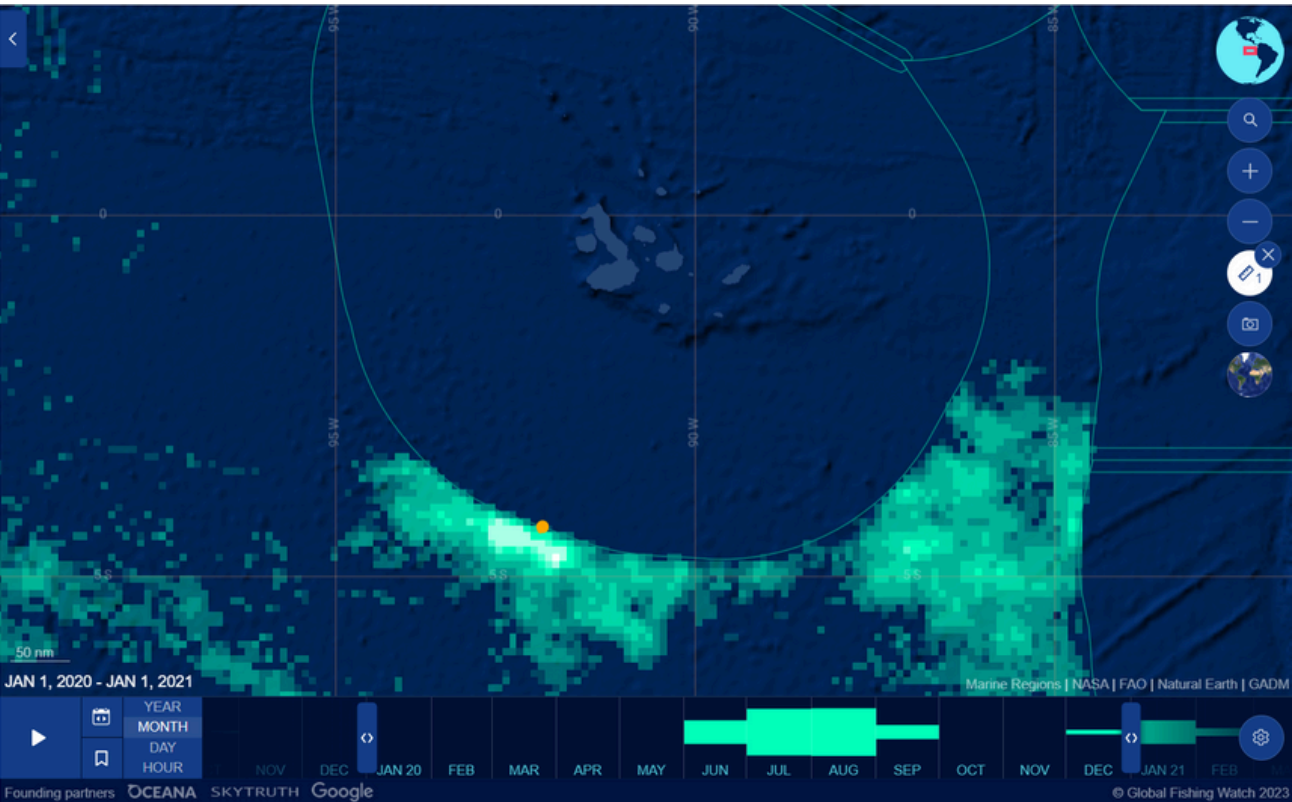
- Direct diplomacy between countries, backed by demonstrations of sincerity by the aggrieved party, produced the best results
- Attempts to rely solely on military forces and multilateral institutions produced less satisfactory results
- Not attempting to solve a problem predictably leaves said problem unsolved
- Small states can push back against large states through diplomacy

Future Study?

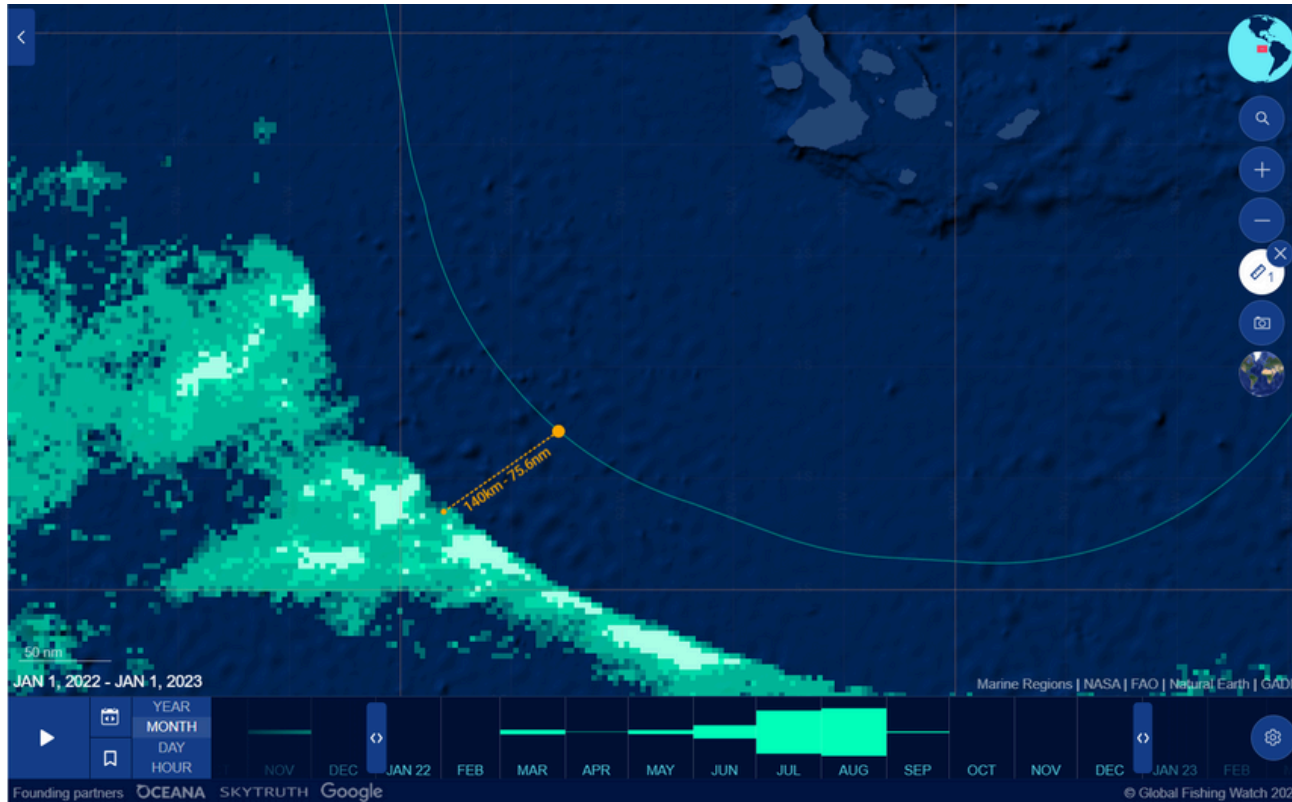
- Case study of Colombia to compare with other signatories of 2021 joint diplomatic statement
- Case studies of other Latin American Countries, e.g. Argentina

Ecuador

- Chinese IUU focused around Galapagos Islands
- Ecuador did direct diplomacy with China
- Backed it up by deploying their navy, conducting joint exercises with neighbors, and issuing joint diplomatic statement with neighbors to show regional support
- China reigned in their fishermen in 2021



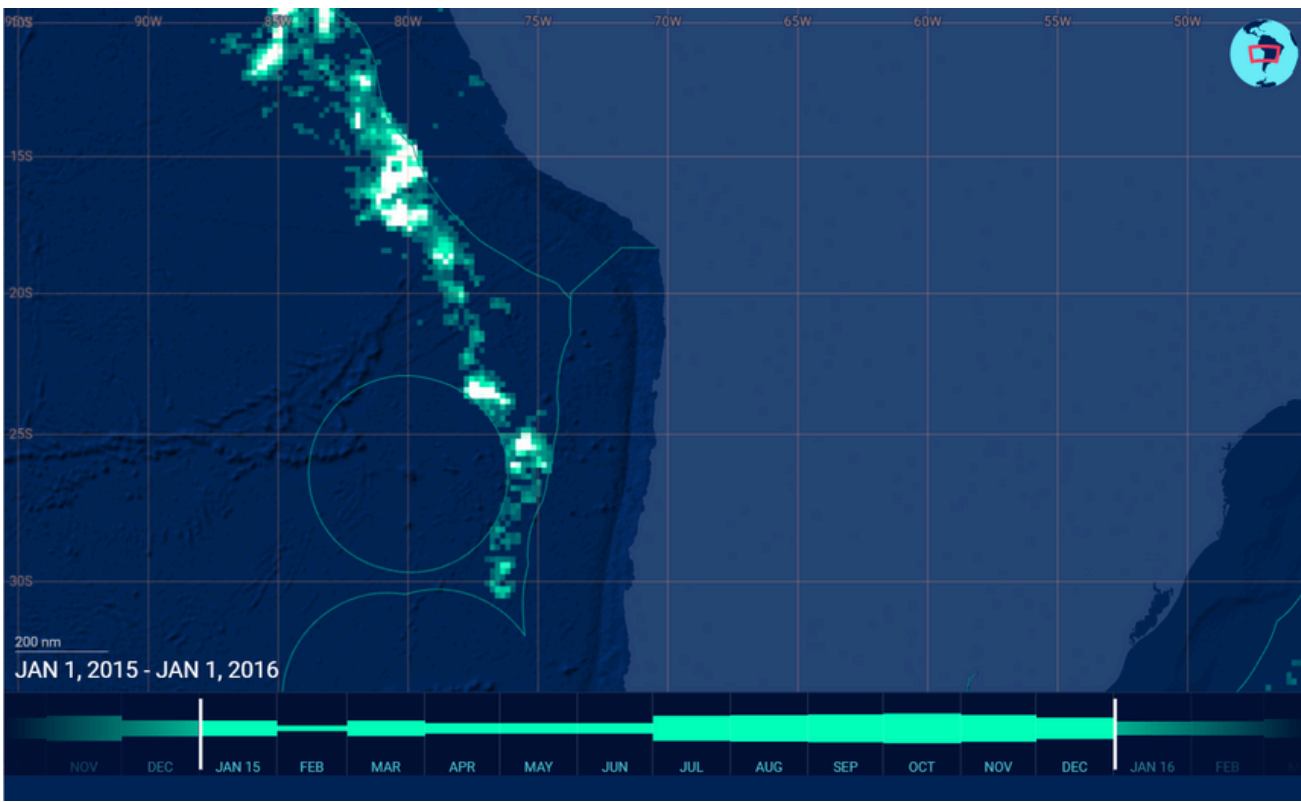
Chinese fishing ships hugging Ecuador's EEZ around the Galapagos Islands in 2020 (Global Fishing Watch)



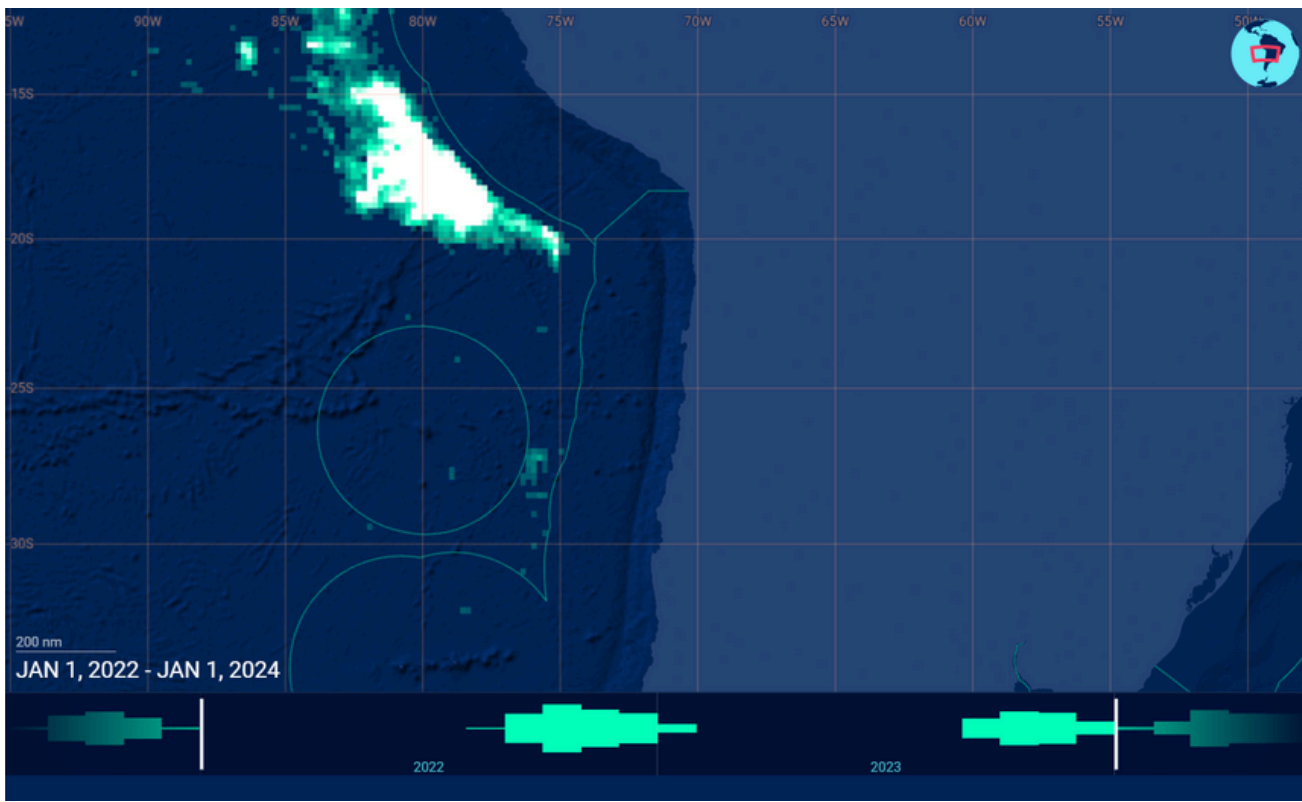
Chinese fishing ships keeping ~100 nautical miles away from Ecuador's EEZ in 2022 (Global Fishing Watch)

Chile

- IUU in 2 places: Easter Island/Rapa Nui and in northern coast--separate fleets for each spot
- IUU for Chile is recorded as early as 2015 in the north, and 2003 for Rapa Nui
- Chile focused on using their large & skilled navy
- Diplomatic actions focused on multilateral organizations and legal efforts to make navy more effective
- Moderate success with this strategy, IUU contained but not stopped



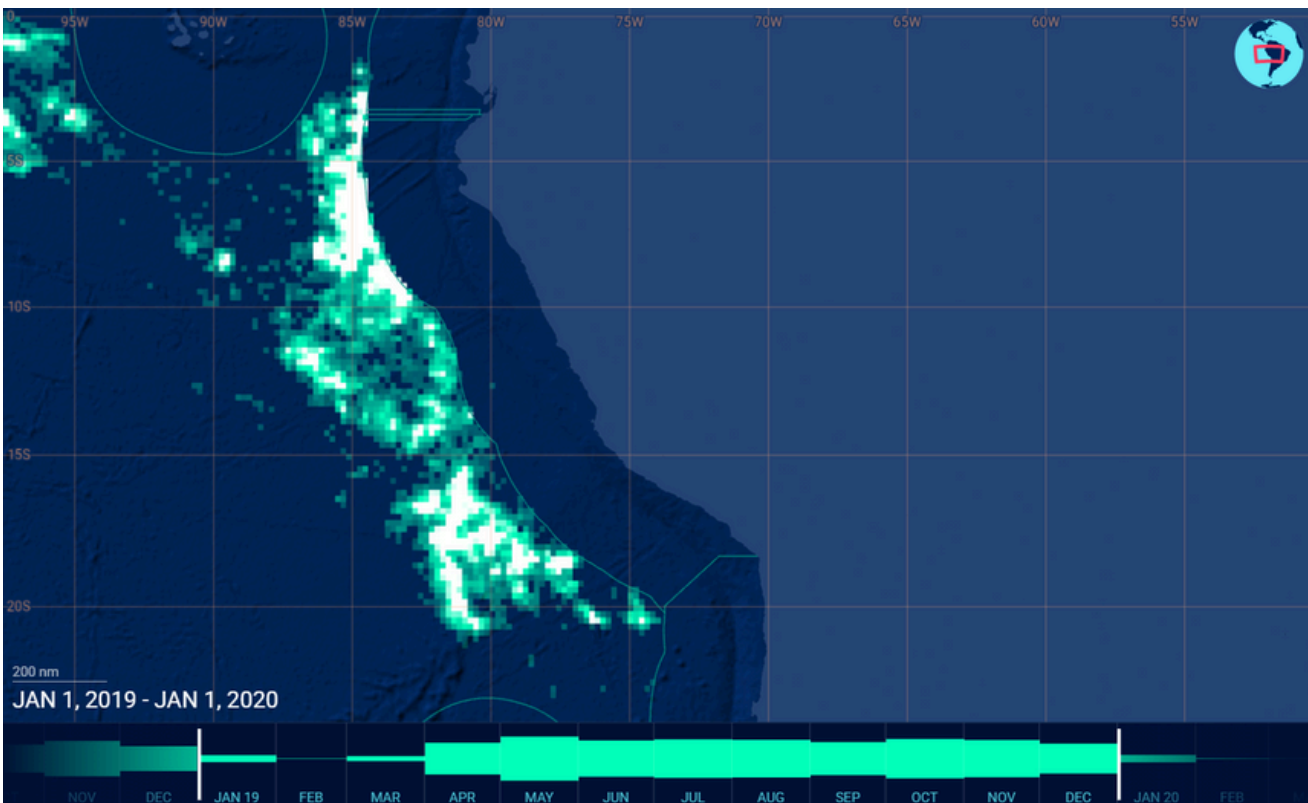
Chinese fishing ships massed along Chile's EEZ in 2015 (Global Fishing Watch)



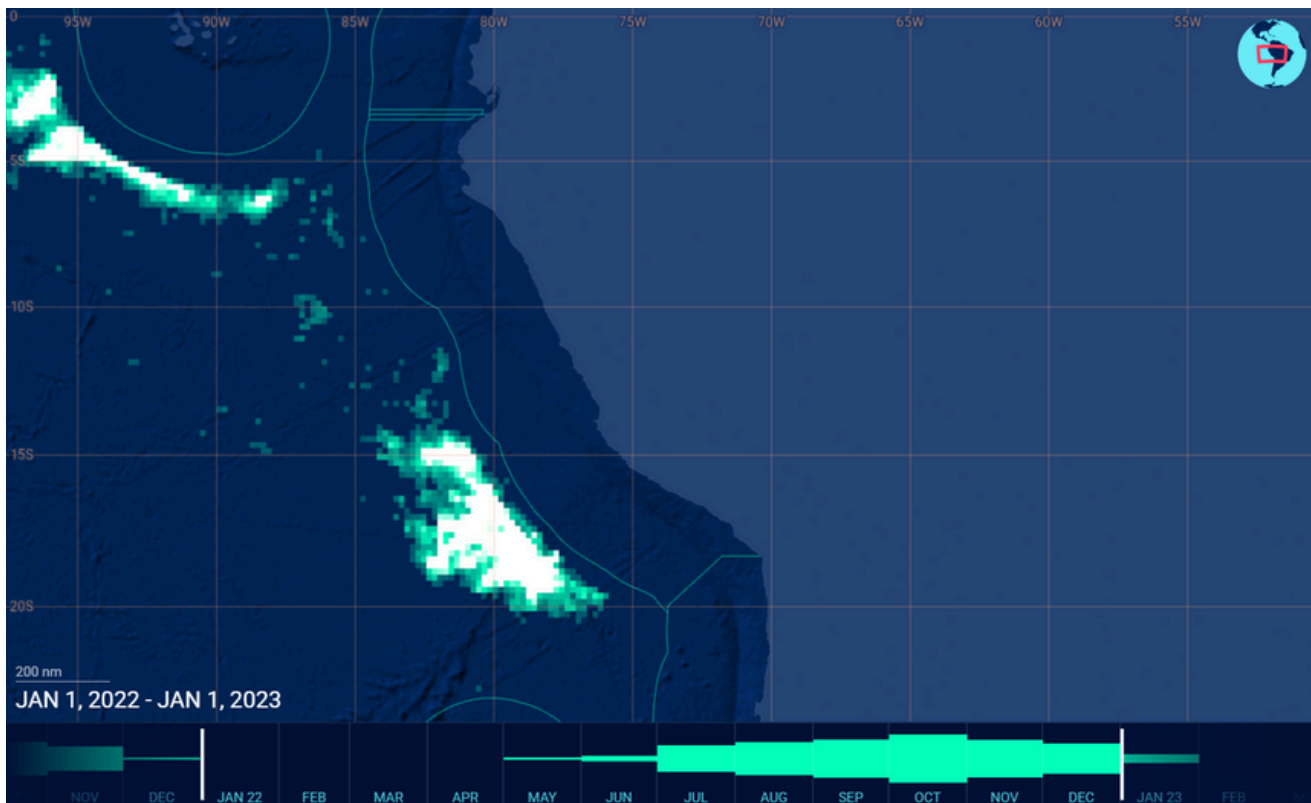
Significantly reduced Chinese fishing activity near Chile by 2022 (Global Fishing Watch)

Peru

- Squid fishing is a vital part of Peruvian economy, more so than Chile or Ecuador
- Despite importance of protecting fisheries, Peru took little action against Chinese IUU
- No naval deployments, only spottily enforced regulations to counter IUU
- Chinese economic influence, Peruvian political turmoil, & lack of a perceived danger among Peruvians prevented an effective response--some reduction in IUU, but likely due to spillover of Ecuadorian efforts



Chinese fishing ships hugging Peru's EEZ in 2019 (Global Fishing Watch)



Slightly reduced Chinese fishing activity in 2022, with less activity right near the EEZ (Global Fishing Watch)