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Experts Pushing for High-Seas Fishing Ban Win 'Nobel Prize for Environment'

Fisheries experts Daniel Pauly and Rashid Sumaila have won the 2023 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, an award administered by the University of Southern California.

March 26, 2023 by [Mongabay](#) [Leave a Comment](#)



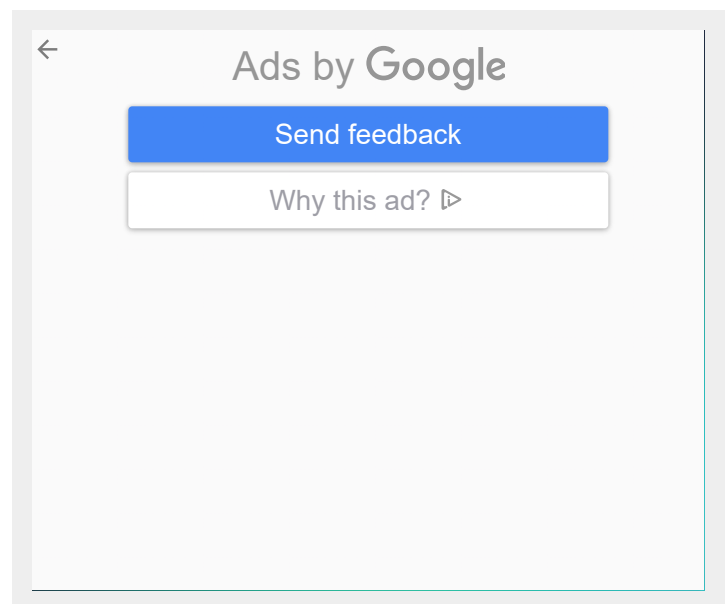
By Mongabay.com

- *Fisheries experts Daniel Pauly and Rashid Sumaila have won the 2023 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, an award administered by the University of Southern California.*
- *The prize has been referred to as the “Nobel Prize for the environment” and comes with a \$250,000 award to be shared between the two laureates.*
- *Both Pauly and Sumaila have said they would like to use the prize opportunity to spread the message that it’s necessary to ban all fishing on the high seas, those parts of the ocean that don’t fall under any national jurisdiction.*

Ocean fisheries experts Daniel Pauly and Rashid Sumaila have been awarded the 2023 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, referred to as a “Nobel Prize for the environment,” in recognition of their scientific achievements.

Pauly and Sumaila, who are colleagues at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, have spent decades researching human impacts on marine ecosystems, including overfishing, and their work has been widely used to inform decisions around fisheries management.

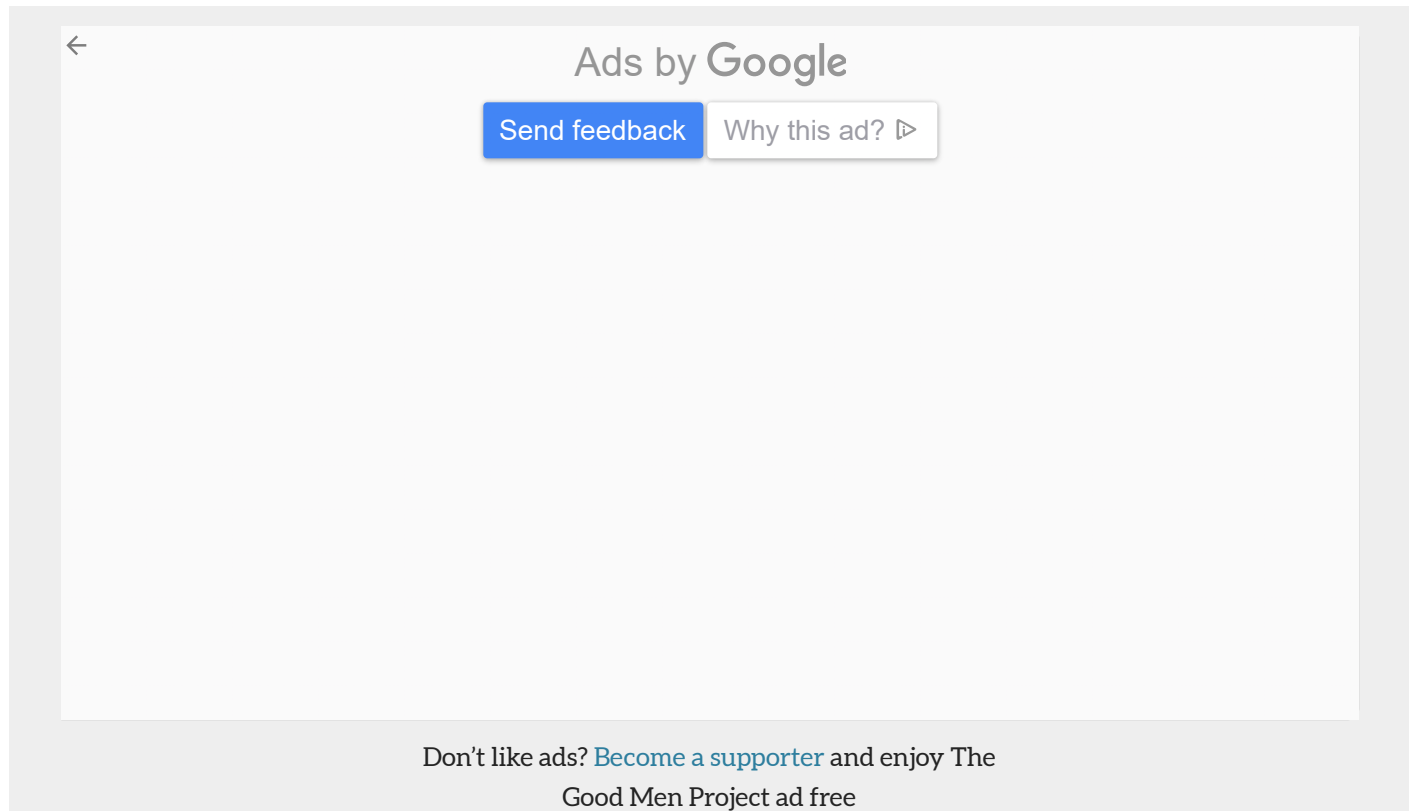
Both laureates hold positions as University Killam Professors at UBC – the highest possible honor the university can bestow upon a member of faculty.



Pauly was born in France, but he was kidnapped as a child to work as a live-in servant for a Swiss family. At 17, he escaped to Germany where he put himself through high school, eventually earning a doctorate in fisheries biology, zoology and physical oceanography from the University of Kiel. He joined the UBC faculty in 1994 as a fisheries scientist, where his research focused on the fast-paced decline of fish species in freshwater and marine environments. In 1995, Pauly coined the term “shifting baseline,” which alludes to a way of measuring environmental change against previous reference points that can mask the true nature of ecological degradation over time. In 1999, Pauly founded the Sea Around Us, an initiative at UBC that identifies and qualifies global fisheries trends, for which he currently acts as the principal investigator. Pauly is also the founder of FishBase.org, an online encyclopedia of more than 30,000 fish species.


Sumaila, a fisheries economist with roots in Ghana and Nigeria and a doctorate in economics from the University of Bergen in Norway, has focused his research on bioeconomics, marine ecosystem

valuation, as well as the analysis of global issues like fisheries subsidies, marine protected areas (MPAs), illegal fishing, climate change, marine plastic pollution and oil spills. He has worked in fisheries across the world – in places such as Norway, Canada, Brazil, Namibia and Hong Kong – which has led him to become one of the most widely cited experts on fisheries economics, natural resource economics, and ocean policy. He also serves as the Canada Research Chair in Interdisciplinary Ocean and Fisheries Economics at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries and the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, both at UBC. Sumaila says his work is driven by the question of how to “bequeath a healthy ocean to our children and grandchildren, so they too can have the option to do the same.”



Pauly and Sumaila said they would like to use the opportunity afforded by the Tyler Prize award to spread the message that it's necessary to ban all fishing on the high seas, those parts of the ocean that don't fall under any national jurisdiction.

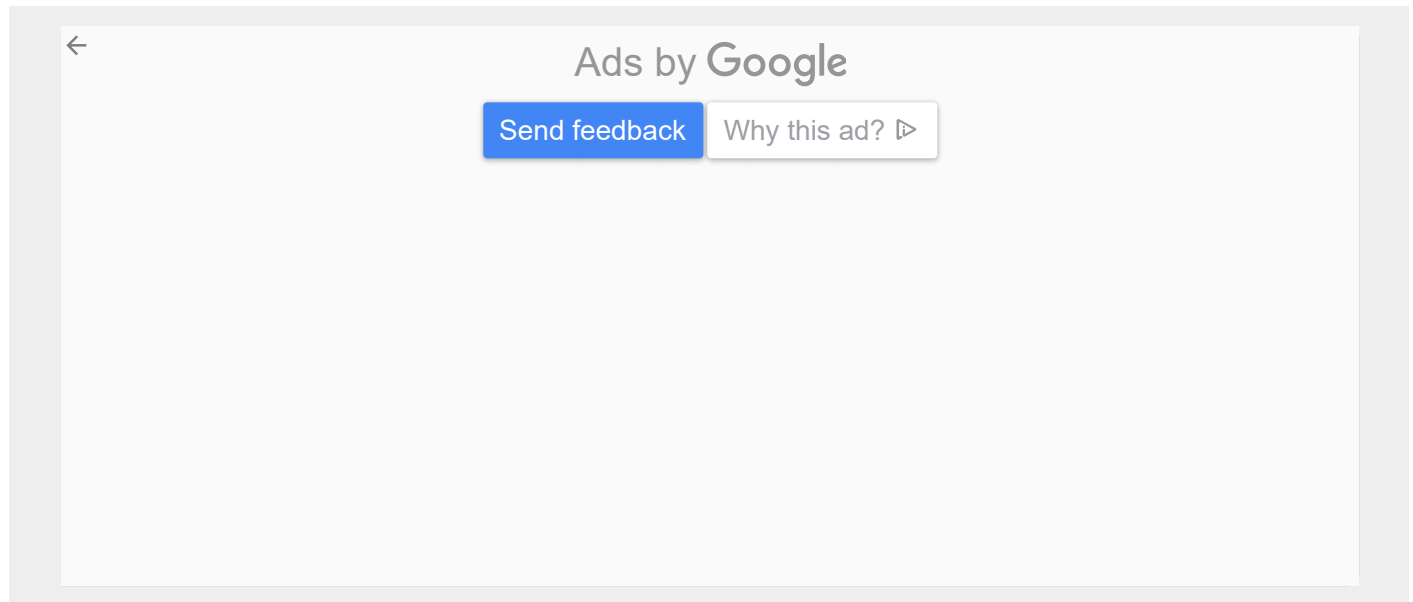
“Creating no-take marine reserves is something we must do,” Sumaila said in a statement. “Banning fishing in the high seas, which is the area outside the 200-nautical-mile zones of maritime countries, will create a critically-needed ‘fish bank’ for the world.”

 “A high seas fishing ban is one of the most effective ways to reverse the damage inflicted on the ocean through decades of unsustainable overfishing, mostly at the hands of wealthy Western countries,” Pauly said in the statement. “Our modeling shows that closing the high seas would result in no loss in total global catch – just a more equitable distribution. Most commercially fished

species move back and forth between the high seas and coastal areas, where they can be caught in a country's exclusive economic zone.

"If we don't stop overfishing, we will lose marine stocks essential for food security and biodiversity, and the ocean's ability to effectively regulate global temperatures," Pauly added.

Sumaila said the establishment of the world's largest marine protected areas in the Ross Sea off Antarctica in 2016, as well as the commitment of more than 190 countries to protect 30% of their land and waters by 2030, were encouraging steps, but that "we must move faster."



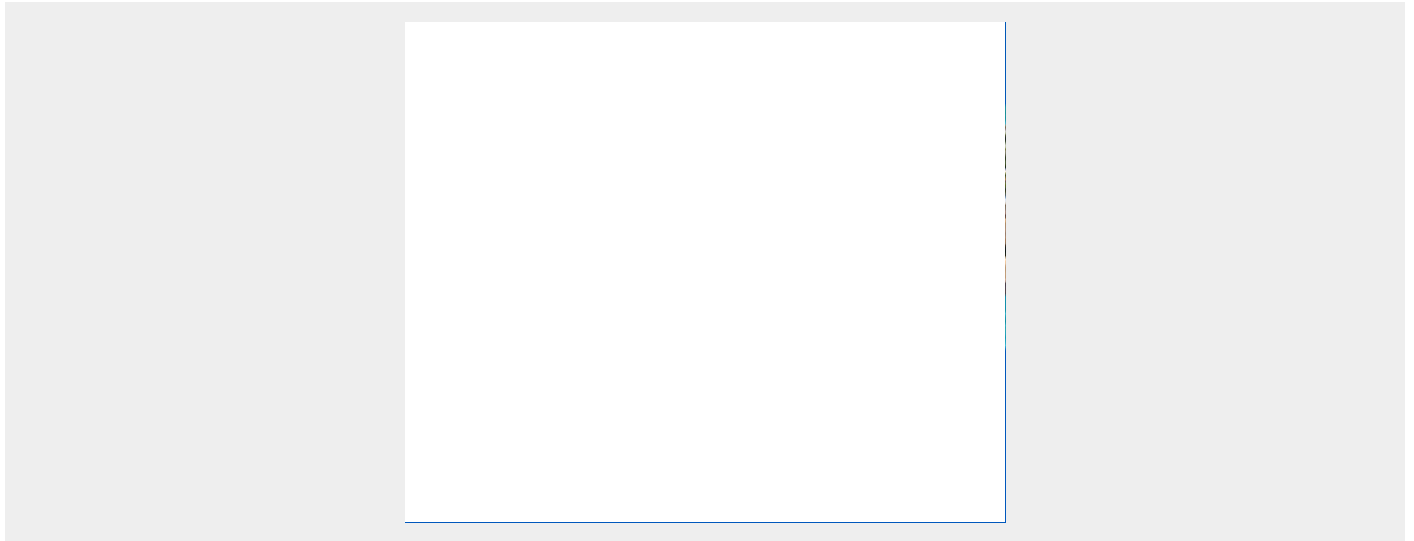
"Overfishing increases global emergencies such as climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity – particularly for already vulnerable communities, such as Indigenous Peoples and populations in the Global South," Sumaila said.

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, chair of the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement, said she was honored to give recognition to the two scientists dedicated to protecting the world's natural resources for future generations.

"Our lives and livelihoods depend on the ocean, which covers more than 70 per cent of Earth," Marton-Lefèvre said in a statement. "The Tyler Prize Executive Committee recognizes Professors Pauly's and Sumaila's outstanding individual and complementary achievements towards the conservation of this global life-source. By pioneering analytical approaches and knowledge platforms to assess the global state of world fisheries, they have discovered viable solutions, offering policymakers a realistic pathway towards the sustainable management of ocean fisheries."


The Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement is administered by the University of Southern California (USC), and 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the prize. On April 27, 2023, the laureates will give a public presentation at USC, and the following day they will be presented with a prize of \$250,000, to be shared equally.

“Rashid and Daniel are an incredible duo – their work has had an immense impact on our understanding of ocean fisheries and marine sustainability, and generated a wealth of policy outcomes around the globe,” Meigan Aronson, dean of the Faculty of Science at UBC. “We couldn’t be prouder of this recognition from the Tyler Prize Executive Committee.”



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