

2023

Dr. Daniel Pauly & Dr. Rashid Sumaila

Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement

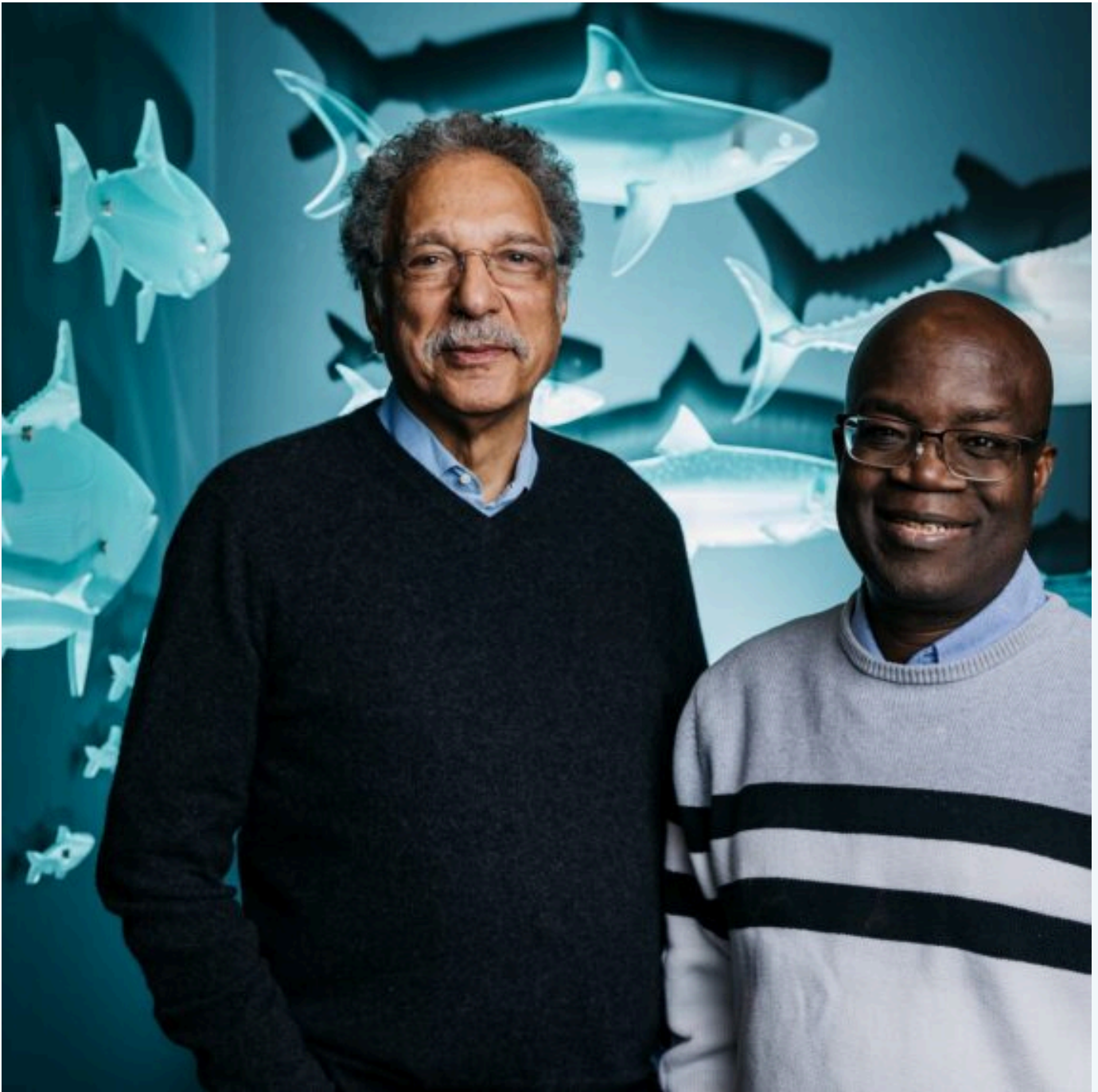
Marine biologist, fisheries economist



Natural Sciences

Oceans and Fisheries





Marine biologist Daniel Pauly and fisheries economist Rashid Sumaila bring an interdisciplinary and global approach to fisheries sustainability efforts – work that has garnered the University of British Columbia researchers the 2023 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement. The award, administered by the University of Southern California, is often described as the “Nobel Prize for the environment.”



The long-time colleagues at UBC's Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries (Dr. Somalia is jointly appointed to the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs) research the subsidies that drive the global growth in fisheries.

"This is taxpayer money that our governments advance to the fishery sector," says Dr. Sumaila of the subsidies. "What we have done together is to develop a global database of this, covering all maritime countries."

Their subsidies tool has been embraced around the world. "The World Trade Organization members use this as the source of comprehensive data to help them come to some decisions on how to remove harmful subsidies," he says.

Adds Dr. Pauly: "Our estimates of subsidies have replaced other estimates that the World Bank, the OECD and others produce because they omitted the Global South."

The two also collaborate in studying the situation on the high seas, which is the area outside the 200-nautical-mile zones of maritime countries.

"What are the biological biodiversity principles, the equity principle, in these areas? It's supposed to be owned by all of humanity, but only a few countries take up the value."

— Rashid Sumaila

The pair came up with a bold solution: close the high seas to fishing and turn it into a "fish bank" for the world.

The fish would be protected, not caught while in the 'bank,' and because they would come in and out of the fish bank, biodiversity would increase and smaller nations would have a greater chance to catch the fish.

"It's good for the economics side and good for climate change," says Dr. Sumaila.

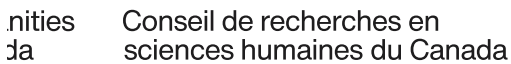
Of course, they've received pushback to the proposal, but the researchers refute arguments on why it won't work. For example, naysayers respond that such a ban can't be policed. But Drs. Pauly and Sumaila say monitoring can be done through satellites.

"We can even see seagulls from space, so the boats can be seen," says Dr. Pauly. "Also you can identify the gear that they use."



Progress is being made on the idea; some countries have committed to protecting a percentage of the high seas. “Slowly we are getting there,” says Dr. Sumaila.

The two have dedicated some of the funding from the Tyler Prize to establishing what they call the “Africa UBC Visiting Fellows Program.” The goal is to support interactions between faculty in Africa and those at UBC. The funds have been matched by UBC’s deans of arts and science to help make the program a reality.



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