Overfishing

Overfishing is when fish are removed from the ocean at a rate that does not allow them to replenish, resulting in those species becoming underpopulated and even extinct.

Overfishing endangers ocean ecosystems and also the billions of people around the world who rely on seafood as a key protein source. Without sustainable fishing practices, our oceans fisheries will collapse and the world will face a food crisis.

Learn about more the problem of overfishing with this overfishing simulation game.

Materials

- 2-5 people
- One plate
- Spoons
- Straws
- Napkins
- String
- Tape
- Colorful goldfish

Step 1

Each person should use the spoons, straws, sting, and tape to create their own fishing pole. You must be creative! The goal is to get the fish from the plate (aka the ocean) into your napkin (aka boat).

Step 2

Place around 8-10 goldfish on your plate. Assign a value to each color of gold fish. For example, yellow gold fish are worth $10, green goldfish are worth $7, etc.

Over-fishing

Step 3

Once the fishing poles are made and the ocean is stocked with fish, set a timer for 30 seconds. During the 30 seconds each person must use their fishing pole to catch fish and place them in their boat. The person with the highest value of fish at the end of the four fishing seasons wins!

Step 4

After the 30 seconds, record the number of fish you caught and the value. Any fish remaining on the table, still attached to the fishing pole, or destroyed during fishing do not count.

Step 5

Adjust the number of fish in your ocean to account for reproduction by adding one new fish of each color for each two that remain. You will repeat steps 3-5 three times to account for four total fishing seasons.

Step 6

At the end of the four fishing seasons, observe the changes in fish population over time. Is your ocean completely empty, hoe many fish of each color are left? Will you be able to fish for another season?

Step 7

Now that you've seen the effects of overfishing, can you figure out a strategy to keep your ocean populated and still be able to fish?

This issue is what scientists and fisherman deal with everyday. How do you keep the oceans ecosystem healthy, and also feed the world at the same time?