



A fishy business: Space for species justice in global wildlife economies?

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COMMERCIALIZATION OR CONSERVATION?

- Marine wildlife are the second largest legally exploited 'natural resource' after timber (Cooney et al. 2015).
- CITES lists some 38,000 species to protect from overexploitation. Just 6% of these listings are for marine species – around 90% of which are for sea anemones and corals – not 'seafood' species (CITES, 2020).



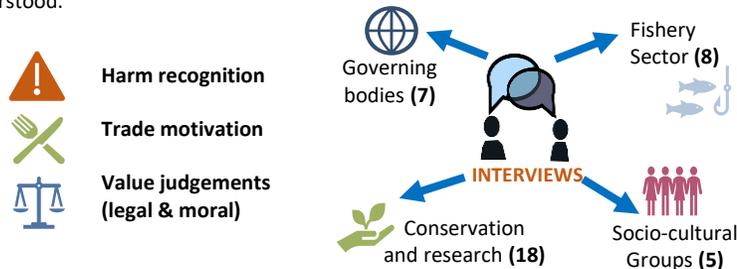
Why are fewer marine species recognised under CITES and how do perceptions of harm and victimhood influence the protection/exploitation of marine species?

METHODS

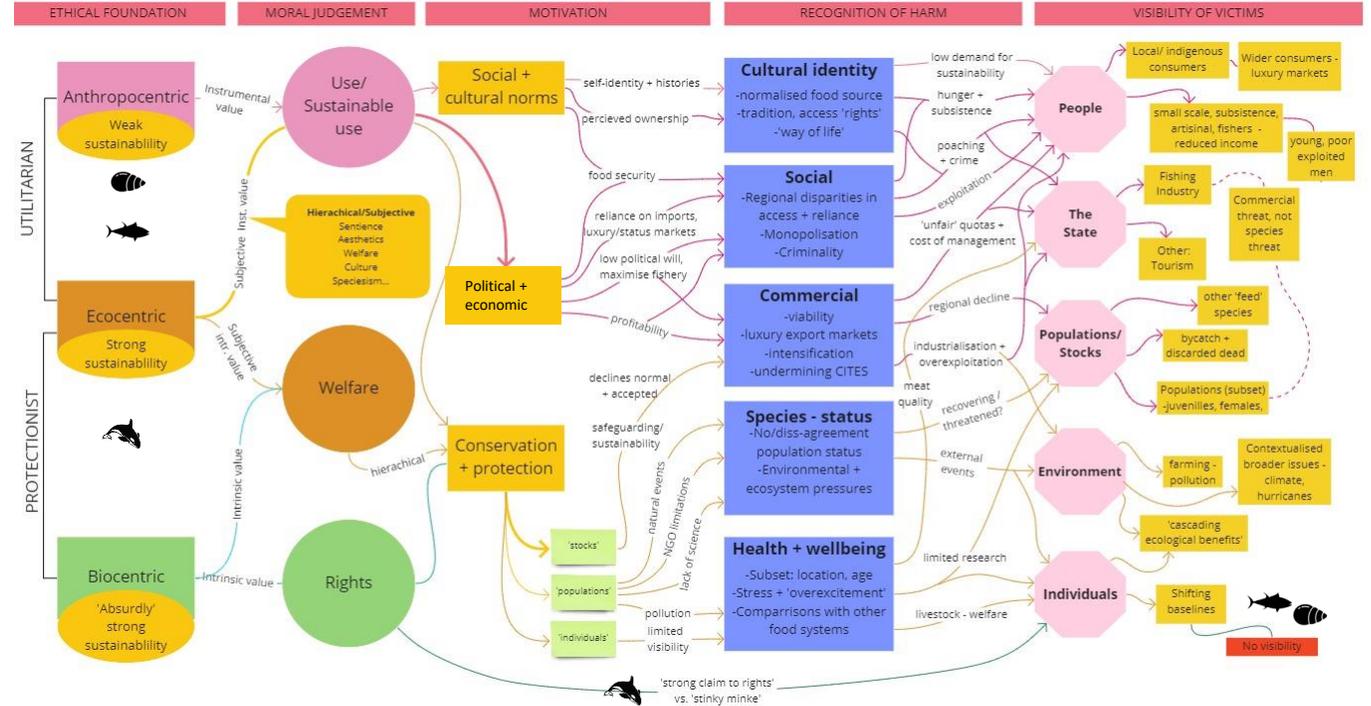
This study compares public and stakeholder perceptions surrounding harm and victimhood of three commercially exploited marine species:

- Minke whale - CITES Appendix I
- Queen conch - CITES Appendix II
- Atlantic bluefin tuna (ABFT)- CITES proposal rejected in 1992 and 2010

A mixed methods approach, combining expert stakeholder interviews, online surveying, and secondary data collection was used to assess how harms and victims are portrayed and understood.



- 38 semi-structured interviews lasting from half an hour to over two hours
- Online public survey capturing 164 responses – (UK, US, Europe, Norway, Canada...)
- Trade data (CITES trade database, ICCAT catch statistics, FAO fishery records)



THE CONSTRUCTED VALUE OF WILDLIFE: VISIBILITY & VICTIMISATION

Social, political, and economic constructs of harm, crime, and victimhood

Social norms & cultural identities play a large role in perpetuating and normalising exploitation. But, political and economic motivators are also significant, particularly when defining what are legal and illegal wildlife trades. When these judgements are framed around anthropocentric and speciesist frameworks harms toward species can be made invisible.

Parallels in exploitation of marine species and vulnerable people

Implementing trade legislation is costly, creating power and economic asymmetries. Both the queen conch and ABFT fisheries have issues with pervasive illegal trade at the local level. Here, the meaning of harm is shifted (to: fishery, locals), in response to inequitable trade impositions and increased commercial competition.

Re-conceptualising victims – visibility and value

There is a hierarchical element to the recognition of marine species as victims of their exploitation. To address speciesism and injustices toward other species, human-human injustices (power, economic, social etc.) must also be recognised as part of an interconnected system of oppression.