

PRESS RELEASE

## **Ecotrust Canada launches Spyglass, an open data tool on illegal fishing and criminal activities at sea**

**November 15, 2019, Vancouver, BC** – The ecological, social and economic costs of illegal fishing affects coastal communities across the world. So Ecotrust Canada is proud to announce the [launch of Spyglass](#) - a new online tool that brings transparency to illegal fishing and criminal activities at sea. Spyglass ([spyglass.fish](#)) is a cooperative platform that provides open access to a growing database of nearly 3,700 vessel entries, and 1,200 company entries, all linked to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and other types of transnational crimes. In many coastal regions of the world, surveillance efforts are hindered by a lack of resources. Spyglass is available in five languages and is open to everyone as a community platform, where governments, NGOs and individuals can readily access, submit or request information about vessels and their companies connected to illegal activities.

Dyhia Belhabib, Ecotrust Canada’s Principal Investigator, who developed Spyglass says: *“This tool is aimed at two main things: one, documenting which vessels and companies are high risk, so stopping them from going to the waters where fishing communities benefit from; and two, documenting the drivers behind illegal fishing because we do sometimes criminalize people who are driven into illegal fishing because of the lack of resources.”*

Dr. Rashid Sumaila, Professor of Ocean and Fisheries Economics at the University of British Columbia says: *“This is an excellent contribution to the global fisheries science and management infrastructure.”*

Jim McIsaac, coordinator for the BC Commercial fishing caucus adds: *“Illegal fishing hurts legitimate harvesters, their families and communities, and fisheries management. By shining a light on the bad actors we can hopefully get them off the water making our fisheries more sustainable.”*

### **About Dyhia Belhabib**

[Dr. Dyhia Belhabib](#) is the Principal Investigator in Community Fisheries at Ecotrust Canada, and the Principal Investigator for I-Sea Fisheries. Her work focuses on adding transparency and insight through research on fisheries in Canada and abroad.

### **About Ecotrust Canada**

Ecotrust Canada is an enterprising charity powered by the vision of people and nature thriving together. We develop innovative economic solutions that enable rural and remote communities across Canada to lead in the management of, and benefits from, local resources – from forestry to fisheries to housing and energy. Our on-the-ground work and systems approach is entrepreneurial, partnership-based and relentlessly practical. [ecotrust.ca](#)

### **For more information:**

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