



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment, and sustainability in Indonesia that have appeared in print or online in local, regional, and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our website at www.starlingresources.com. If you would like to add colleagues or friends to our distribution list or unsubscribe, please contact us at newsdigest@starlingresources.com.*

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A. Marine and Fisheries

[Indonesia to cut tuna harvest by 10% in bid for more sustainable fishery](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 21 June 2023

The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) has released its harvest strategy paper showing it will progressively cut its tuna catch volume by 10% of the 2021 level over the course of three years. The paper, citing depleting populations of skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) and yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), said the strategy should ideally come into effect no later than 2026 as part of the implementation of the ministry's new quota-based and zone-based fisheries policy. A ministerial decree will be issued as the legal basis for the strategy. Indonesia catches more tuna than any other country, accounting for 16% of global supply. In

2021 it produced 791,000 tonnes of tuna, including skipjack, yellowfin, and mackerel tuna (*Euthynnus affinis*), but intensive fishing of wild tuna has made the fishery unsustainable, with much of Indonesia's fishing grounds in the Pacific and Indian oceans already fully exploited and many species over-fished.

[**Strategi Pemanfaatan Perikanan Tuna Tropis di Perairan Kepulauan Indonesia**](#) (Harvest Strategy for Tropical Tuna Fisheries in the Indonesian Archipelagic Waters), Directorate General of Capture Fisheries, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (June 2023) [Google Doc].

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[**Walmart, Sam's Club strengthen tuna sourcing policy**](#)

—Christine Blank, *SeafoodSource*, 20 June 2023

Walmart is updating its seafood sourcing policy to require tuna suppliers to source exclusively from vessels that have 100% observer monitoring—either electronic or human observer—by 2027 and zero transshipment unless the activity is 100% covered by observer monitoring. Along with its goal to have all Walmart and Sam's Club shelf-stable private and national brand tuna come from a fishery improvement project (FIP) or fisheries certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) by 2025, the new requirements will “encourage best practices and drive continuous improvement by helping address systemic issues in the tuna supply chain,” the company said. Walmart prioritized the two changes to address systemic issues in seafood supply chains, such as by-catch, illegal fishing, abandonment of ghost gear, accidental catch of non-targeted species, and poor standards on vessels. The changes apply to all Walmart US, Walmart Canada, and Sam's Club stores.

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[**On the Hook criticisms of the Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\)**](#)

—Chris Chase, *SeafoodSource*, 15 June 2023

A report by 'On The Hook' criticizing the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) charged that the organization certifies harmful fishing practices and has failed to keep up with the pace of change required to provide sustainable seafood. The report calls on the MSC to stop certification of fisheries targeting unrecovered stocks; remove certification of fisheries that demonstrate a significant level of threat to endangered, threatened, and protected species; remove financial conflicts of interest from the certification process; prohibit the use of fish-aggregating devices from certified fisheries; and prohibit dredging and trawling in biodiversity and carbon-sensitive areas. MSC Fisheries Standard Director Ernesto Jardim said in 2022 that the difficulty for any sustainability standard is ensuring it strikes a balance between sustainability and achievability.

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[**MSC says On The Hook report misrepresents the program**](#)

—Chris Chase, *SeafoodSource*, 23 June 2023

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) criticised a recent On The Hook report (see previous item), saying it misrepresented the program and failing to credit the review and update MSC's Version 3.0 of its fisheries standard, published in October 2022, and gave little credit to improvements the organization has made, some in response to changes previously urged by On The Hook. MSC said the improved standard provides greater protection for marine wildlife, new requirements on ghost gear, and a larger US\$100 million fundraising goal to aid fisheries in

adopting the standard, with an emphasis on small-scale and emerging economy fisheries. The organization rejected On The Hook's claim that its credibility had been eroded, noting that an independent survey of over a thousand stakeholders in 2021 found this not to be the case, with the vast majority saying they trusted us to deliver our mission to end overfishing.

[Indonesia signs pact with IPNLF and companies on pole-and-line one-by-one fisheries](#)

—Chris White, *SeafoodSource*, 8 June 2023

The Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) has signed an accord drafted by the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) backing pole-and-line one-by-one fisheries. The agreement was joined by 17 IPNLF member companies and calls for 1) safeguarding the health and well-being of all workers in one-by-one tuna supply chains; 2) elevating market recognition of one-by-one tuna fisheries; 3) supporting investments in innovations and climate-friendly technology to reduce the carbon footprint of one-by-one tuna supply chains; and 4) following global best practices in tuna handling and processing. Indonesia accounts for 16% of global tuna supply, about one million tonnes annually. "Indonesian one-by-one fisheries underpin local livelihoods and provide equitable distribution of wealth, food security, and gender-equal employment opportunities," IPNLF said. KKP Fisheries Resources Management Director Ridwan Mulyana said the agreement underpins the key role small-scale fisheries will play in Indonesia's "blue transformation" economic plan.

B. Forests and Land Use

[Coffee in short supply globally, but Indonesian growers fail to take advantage](#)

—Yohana Belinda, *TheJakartaPost*, 21 June 2023

Increased fertilizer costs and climate change are causing a global shortage of coffee which will drive up prices, but Indonesian growers are unlikely to benefit. The global coffee market is expected to experience another year of deficit, with the shortfall estimated at 7.3 million bags [438,000 tonnes], according to the International Coffee Organization (ICO). The higher coffee prices normally increases demand for robusta, a less expensive coffee mainly used for soluble coffee and flavorings, but stockpiles have shrunk in Vietnam, the top Robusta producer, while Indonesia, the third-largest producer, will see its 2023 coffee production fall 20% year-on-year due to damage from excessive rainfall across robusta growing regions. Annette Anhar, from the family-owned Tugu Group, which has an 880-ha coffee plantation in Blitar, East Java. Anhar said the major factor behind rising coffee prices was growing demand, both domestic and global, but that climate change had also played a role. "For now, we are pricing our robusta beans at US\$3.50 to US\$4.00 per kg, while arabica will be US\$8/kg," Anhar said.

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[Palm oil giants face corruption charges as Indonesia probe widens](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 20 June 2023

Prosecutors have charged three leading palm oil companies with corruption relating to the cooking oil shortage across the country in 2022. Permata Hijau, Wilmar Nabati International, and Musim Mas are alleged to have benefited from the criminal actions of their executives who were convicted earlier this year for conspiring with a top trade ministry official to secure export permits allowing the companies to skirt obligations to allocate cooking oil for the domestic market. A spokesman for the Attorney General's Office said judges in the trial of the executives had ruled that their actions represented their respective companies and were not isolated

incidents. The executives were initially sentenced to between one and three years in prison, prompting prosecutors to appeal, which resulted in the sentences being extended to between five and either years. Wilmar has also been fined by Indonesia's anti-competition watchdog the KPU for restricting sales of cooking oil during last year's shortage.

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[Sumatran farmers worry as government halts oil palm fertilizer subsidies](#)

—Agus Susanto, *Mongabay*, 15 June 2023

In 2022, Indonesia withdrew palm oil from the list of commodities qualifying for government fertilizer subsidies. Some small-scale farmers now fear losing their livelihoods if they cannot maintain productivity from their holdings without access to cheap chemical fertilizer, while others say they could afford open-market fertilizer provided the price of palm oil remains high. Typically, farmers would need to spend Rp 4.5 million (US\$302) annually to pay for fertilizer for a 3 ha plantation area. Yet other farmers are shifting toward organic fertilizer and improvised soil amendments. Applying compost and cropping oil palm plantations with nitrogen-fixing legumes is another strategy, but many oil palm farmers are used to using chemical fertilizers. The country still allocates subsidies for nine foodstuffs and prioritizes three plantation commodities—coffee, cocoa, and sugar cane. Indonesia is the world's largest exporter of palm oil, accounting for more than half of the country's 2022 trade surplus.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation, and Protected Area

[Newborn Javan hawk-eagle spotted in next in West Java](#)

—Theresia Sufa, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 June 2023

Officials from Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park Center and the Raptor Conservation Society reported they had spotted a 10-day old Javan Hawk Eagle in Geger Bentang, at the Cibodas National Park Management resort in Cianjur, West Java. The chick is the offspring of a male named Mandala and a female named Wangi that have been living in the area since 2010. The Javan hawk-eagle's breeding period occurs only once every two years and the female produces only one egg. The endemic Javan hawk-eagle species is the inspiration for Indonesia's national symbol, the Garuda. The Javan Hawk Eagle (*Nisaetus baratelsi*) is classified as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. The total population has been estimated to be only 300-500 individuals, and decreasing.

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[Several reef sharks at greater threat of extinction than previously realized](#)

—Elizabeth Claire Alberts, *Mongabay*, 15 June 2023

A new study found that populations of five key reef shark species, including gray reef sharks (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*), blacktip reef sharks (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*), whitetip reef sharks (*Triaenodon obesus*), nurse sharks (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) as well as Caribbean reef sharks (*Carcharhinus perezi*) have declined 60-73% globally from baseline values. These results are being used to update the status of the sharks on the IUCN Red List, all five species

now appearing to qualify as Endangered. The study also showed that reefs that are protected or governed with strong fisheries management regimes had healthier shark populations.

Paper: Colin A. Simpfendorfer *et al.*, "[Widespread diversity deficits of coral reef sharks and rays](#)", *Science* 380:6650, 15 June 2023.

D. Climate Change, Energy, and Mining

[Indonesian businesses charge PLN monopoly hampers development of renewable energy](#)

—Aditya Hadi, *TheJakartaPost*, 21 June 2023

Private companies in Indonesia charge that PLN's monopoly over electricity management is hampering development of renewable energy. The government target is for renewable energy to contribute 23% to the total energy mix by 2025, since 2019, Indonesia's renewable capacity only grew by 2 gigawatts (GW), only a quarter of the amount needed. Pushes from businesses have met obstacles. Hariyadi Sukamdani, outgoing Indonesia Employers Association (Apindo) chair said slow progress was due to many investments in renewable energy not being commercially feasible as long as PLN is the sole off-taker of electric power. The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) said more needed to be done to ensure renewables could withstand the existing dominance of fossil fuels through fair regulation, reasonable prices, or subsidies for firms building renewable energy plants.

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[Indonesian coal giant Adaro's 'sustainable smelter' slammed as 'greenwashing'](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 15 June 2023

Indonesia's largest coal miner, Adaro, has been slammed for plans to build coal-fired captive power plants for a new aluminium smelter, which the company had marketed as a "flagship green, renewable development for Indonesia"—language environmentalists describe as 'greenwashing'. Adaro is reportedly struggling to secure financing for the project due to the greenwashing allegations as more banks steer clear of fossil fuel projects. Adaro denied the report, saying five banks are committed to funding the project, but hasn't named them. The power plants, with a combined capacity of 2.2 gigawatts, will supply Adaro's aluminum smelter in an industrial park (itself branded as "green") in North Kalimantan. The smelter, estimated to cost US\$2 billion, is in the preconstruction phase. Adaro is marketing the entire project as "green" on the basis that the aluminum would be used as raw material in lithium-nickel-cobalt-aluminum oxide (NCA) cathodes commonly used in Electric Vehicle (EV) batteries that will also be produced in the same industrial park. It is planned that the smelter would switch to using power from a hydroelectric plant in 2030.

E. Pollution and Waste

[Discharge water from ships contributes more than 90% of marine toxic contaminants in ports](#)

—Editorial Team, *Safety4Sea*, 14 June 2023

Combined emissions of metals and other toxic compounds from ships endangers the marine environment, according to a study from Chalmers University in Sweden. Including water discharged from ships' scrubbers (whose purpose is to clean exhaust gases), these emissions account for more than 90% of contaminants. Traditionally, environmental risk assessments from shipping looked at one source at a time, but cumulative risks include discharges from showers, toilets and drains, antifouling paint, and scrubber discharge water. The research showed that scrubber discharge water takes up sulfur, heavy metals, and toxic organic compounds from the exhaust gases which then are often pumped directly into the sea. Antifouling paint and scrubber discharge water account for the highest levels of hazardous substances in the marine environment and had the highest contribution to risk. The government of Sweden is considering a ban on the discharge of scrubber water in waters within the Swedish archipelago, but the authors said they would have liked to see a stronger ban extending across larger marine areas.

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[After rough start, UN plastic treaty talks end with mandate for first draft](#)

—Valerie Volcovici, *Reuters*, 13 June 2023

Following a rocky start, about 170 countries gathered in Paris agreed to develop by the end of the year a first draft by November of what could become the first global treaty to curb plastic pollution. The goal is a legally-binding pact to halt the global explosion of plastic waste, projected to almost triple by 2060, with half ending in landfill and less than one-fifth recycled. Saudi Arabia, Russia and China led objections to treaty decisions being adopted by majority vote rather than consensus, an issue which has not been fully resolved. The "high ambition coalition"—an informal group including the EU, Japan, Chile and island nations—wants global targets to reduce plastic production and pollution as well as restrictions on certain hazardous chemicals. The US, Saudi Arabia, and others favor national plans rather than global targets. Tadesse Amera, co-chair of the International Pollutants Elimination Network, said with growing public concern about the plastic pollution crisis, the negotiations need to result in a strong agreement.

F. Investment and Finance

[Indonesia's Temasek-backed eFishery raises US\\$108 million Series D round, becomes unicorn](#)

—Benjamin Cher, *BusinessTimes [Singapore]*, 25 May 2023

Bandung-based agritech start-up eFishery which provides technology, feed, financing, and markets to fish and shrimp farmers in Indonesia raised US\$108 million, based on regulatory filings from VentureCap Insights. The lead investor is 42X fund, a joint fund between Abu Dhabi tech company G42 and sovereign wealth fund Abu Dhabi Growth Fund. After the Series D round, the valuation for eFishery more than tripled from US\$407 million pre-funding to US\$1.3 billion post-funding. In October 2022, eFishery received a Rp 500 billion (US\$ 32.7 million) loan from DBS Bank to fund expansion plans. Launched in 2013 by Gibran Huzaifa, eFishery has an ambitious goal of 300 percent annual growth, and plans to expand operations to ten new markets over the next ten years, including India, China, and Vietnam. eFishery has deployed thousands of feeders serving more than 30,000 fish and shrimp farmers in Indonesia.

[This summary also contains information from a follow-up [story](#) in SeafoodSource by Cliff White.]

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[ECB Executive Board Member defends central bank focus on biodiversity threats](#)

—CarbonPulse, 8 June 2023

Frank Elderson, an Executive Board member of the European Central Bank (ECB) has defended that institution's exploration of the economic impacts of biodiversity loss. Elderson told the *Financial Times* that the ECB's first investigation into the financial risks of environmental degradation revealed that 72% of eurozone companies and 75% of bank loans in the region were exposed to biodiversity loss. "This is not some kind of flower power, tree-hugging exercise," he said, "this is core economics." The research, which studied 4.2 million eurozone companies, showed that the vast majority rely on at least one "nature related" ecosystem service such as pollination, clean water, healthy soil, timber or sand. Disruptions to these services, such as reduced insect populations vital to crop pollination, can affect supply, influence prices, and potentially impact monetary policy, price stability, and inflation. The ECB has been pressuring banks to address biodiversity loss risks, and some have begun to allocate capital for environmental threats in their internal risk assessments, Elderson said, adding that the bank would use "carrots and sticks" to incentivise others.

G. Human Rights and Gender Equality

[Indonesia police arrest nearly 500 human trafficking suspects in crackdown](#)

—AFP via *TheJakartaPost*, 20 June 2023

Police arrested nearly 500 suspects involved in the trafficking of more than 1,500 victims of human smuggling. Indonesia is one of the largest migrant worker exporting nations in Southeast Asia, with hundreds of thousands leaving every year through unofficial routes in search of higher-paying work. National Police spokesman Brig. Gen. Ahmad Ramadhan told AFP authorities had rescued 1,533 victims before they were trafficked out of the country just over the last two weeks. From 5-18 June, police arrested 494 suspects, while five major traffickers were "still being hunted down," he said. Many were rescued from illegal shelters on course to be trafficked as maids, boat crew, or prostitutes, including several cases of child exploitation. Between 100,000 and one million people are sold into sex work or forced into labour every year in Indonesia, according to the UN. The government has moved to increase probes, prosecutions and convictions for human trafficking, and has made efforts to repatriate victims trafficked to other Southeast Asian nations. In the past year, Indonesia has rescued more than a thousand of its nationals working in online scams in Myanmar and Cambodia as the country tries to get a grip on the widespread problem.

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[Addicts went in for treatment, but instead they were enslaved](#)

—Richard D. Paddock, *TheNewYorkTimes*, 18 June 2023

The anti-corruption investigators' investigation into alleged bribery by a powerful local official led them to an estate in North Sumatra where they found 65 men locked in two cages, imprisoned under the guise of a drug rehabilitation program and forced to work as slaves at an oil palm plantation and palm oil factory owned by the official, Terbit Rencana Perangin-angin. But while

Perangin-angin was tried and convicted for bribery and sentenced to 7.5 years imprisonment, he has not been charged or tried on any charges related to the men who were found caged on his property. The police investigation found that 656 men and teenage boys had been imprisoned on Perangin-angin's land during the decade before his arrest. Many were tortured, burned, and sexually assaulted. Six died, including at least three who were tortured to death. So far, 13 men have been prosecuted for their roles, but none of the accused faced more than a single charge, and the longest sentence handed down was three years. The case highlights Indonesia's dismal human rights record and rampant corruption at the local level.

I. Indonesia's new take on naval affairs

[Indonesia-led ASEAN sea drills will take harder aim at China](#)

—Richard Javad Heydarian, *AsiaTimes*, 12 June 2023

Indonesia, the current chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is set to stage the first ever joint military drills limited to the Southeast Asian bloc's navies at a time of escalating tensions between the US and China. The drills will be conducted in the North Natuna Sea, a resource-rich area off the coast of Indonesia's Natuna Islands, according to Indonesian military chief Yudo Margono. Julius Widjojono, an Indonesian military spokesman, said the joint exercises are in response to the "high risk of disaster in Asia, especially in South East Asia." The Natuna islands—which have long been a site for illegal Chinese fishing more recently fortified by a Chinese coast Guard vessel presence—were expressly renamed by Jakarta to challenge China's claims of "traditional rights" in these waters in accord with its "nine-dotted line" South China Sea territorial claim. In recent months, the Philippines accused China's Coast Guard of engaging in aggressive tactics and dangerous manoeuvres in Philippine waters. Malaysia and Vietnam are publicly challenging China's claims and operations in their maritime territories.

II. Faith, politics, and corruption as an Indonesian election year approaches

['Pesantren heresy' claims spark concerns over religious freedom](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 24 June 2023

The Al-Zaytun *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Indramayu, West Java faces potential closure over allegations of heresy and links to religious separatists. Allegations that the school and its leader Panji Gumilang could be linked to the breakaway Indonesian Islamic State (*Negara Islam Indonesia*, NII), sparked concerns from rights groups. Halili Hasan, executive director of the Jakarta-based Setara Institute human rights watchdog, argued that the government's involvement should be limited to allegations of links to the separatist group. "The heresy controversy [is a matter of] religious] interpretation [that] should be left to the domain of religious believers," Halili said. Human Rights Watch Indonesia researcher Andreas Harsono objected to any allegation of heresy against an individual or organization. The *pesantren* had caused controversy after a social media posts showed unsegregated rows of men and women participating in Idul Fitri prayers, which are usually partitioned by gender. West Java governor Ridwan Kamil has formed a multistakeholder team to investigate the school. "This is a political year, so we will separate legal matters, political matters and situations that are politicized," said Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Mahfud MD.

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[Agriculture Minister Syahrul Yasin Limpo allegedly collected tributes from subordinates](#)

—Erwan Hermawan, *Tempo English*, 19 June 2023

The NasDem Party has suffered two major blows. The Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) is investigating charges of bribery involving Agriculture Minister Syahrul, who could follow his NasDem colleague Johnny Plate, the former Communications and Informatics Minister, who was recently detained by the Attorney General's Office over alleged corruption involving construction of internet transceiver towers. KPK investigators have been looking into allegations of gratuities at the Ministry since January. Officials at the ministry confirmed that money was collected from subordinates to meet the needs of the minister, in the amount of RP 250 million (US\$16,682) from each Echelon II official. Where did they get the money? Four Echelon II and III officials said the money was obtained by falsifying official travel orders. A senior ministry official, Imam Mujahidin Fahmid, played a key role in collecting gratuities and was the entry point for employees seeking promotions. But Imam and others denied they were collecting tributes from staff. The funds were allegedly used for operational activities and personal needs, including hire of a private jet and karaoke nights.

III. Violent Islamist networks in Central Sulawesi

[Militant groups in Poso: down but not out](#)

—*Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict*, IPAC Report, 27 June 2023

Violent extremists in Poso, Central Sulawesi may be weak but the former conflict area is vulnerable to re-radicalisation. Extremist networks, including Mujahidin of Easter Indonesia (MIT) and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) have deep roots in the community and remain strong. Police and military operations in the area have resulted in many deaths and arrests, creating potential new recruits. The site of deadly communal conflict between Christians and Muslims the area became a stronghold of Islamist extremists, the only territorially-based Islamist insurgency in Indonesia. MIT, founded in 2012, became one of the first groups in Indonesia to declare allegiance to ISIS. An order from President Joko Widodo in 2015 to end the violence in Poso led to police adopting a shoot-to-kill policy and refusing to let the bodies of the deceased be buried in their home villages, which alienated many families. New sources of instability include high-risk former prisoners that have recently been released or soon will be. Local government and civil society need to work to reduce communal tensions, along with efforts to correct the flaws in the government's deradicalization programs.

End