George, R. (2025). *Every last fish. A deep dive into everything they do for us and we do to them*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. [xii], 292 p. ISBN 978-0-393-88147-9.

Fishing activities have characterized coastal areas in Atlantic Canada for centuries. First Nations communities harvested fish for food and other purposes for millennia before Europeans ventured across the Atlantic beginning in the early 1500s to collect fish for European consumption. Over the past 500 years fisheries have been a major economic factor in this region (Lear, 1998). Today, for example, the Nova Scotia seafood industry, valued at >$2.2B, continues to be a significant contributor to the provincial economy (MacDonald, 2026; Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2026). Although never limitless, fish stocks have often been treated as if they were inexhaustible. The devastating impact of the 1992 moratorium on the cod fishery, particularly for communities in Newfoundland and Labrador (Eddy, 2026), dramatically illustrated misunderstanding of the capacity of marine ecosystems. Significant marine biodiversity loss is now widely reported. The *2026 State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* notes that marine fishery stocks fished within sustainable levels continue to decline and the report frankly states that achieving the "SDG target of 100 percent of stocks within biologically sustainable levels remains extremely challenging" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2026, p. xv). Pillaging of the ocean seems to describe humanity's ongoing relationship with marine life, which with today's technologies could mean exploiting all marine species.

In an aptly titled book *Every last fish,* Rose George offers readers an engaging and informative window into many perspectives of fish life, the fishing industry, and our shared future with marine ecosystems. A journalist and acclaimed author, George immersed herself in fishing activities to meet with real people around the world – divers, biologists, fishers of various types including women and men whose livelihood depend on marine species – and write about the challenges, risks, and dangers of working in aquatic food systems that today employ more than 65 million. The result is a captivating book on a subject that matters to everyone concerned about food security and the health and sustainability of the planet.

Organized in 15 chapters, the book begins with George's own experience in diving in the Bay of Dakar off the coast of Senegal and finding the "sea is alive." Not nearly so full of life as previously, as Daniel Pauly, prominent University of British Columbia fisheries researcher, tells her. Pauly starkly states that the "idea that we can still fish sustainably is nonsense," (p. 6) because the shifting baseline of marine life is continually trending downward. The opening chapter establishes the status of global fisheries from which George takes readers onto a boat with a fisher in UK waters in the second and then around the world in the following chapters. Each chapter is an essay that reveals the diverse experiences of people who work in the seafood industry or who study marine life: workers in the fast fish food business and a school for training fish frying; an investigation of the tragic loss of life in a fishing accident in waters off Alaska; the difficult, demanding practices that women encounter in the industry; the perspectives of trawl fishers; the experiences of small-scale fishers turned into a small-scale navy in World War II; the lonely, life-threatening careers of fish wardens and fisheries officers; the risks and slave-like work of fishing crews; observations about the controversies and operation of salmon aquaculture in several countries, e.g., Norway and Scotland; implementation of off-shore renewable energy use, primarily wind energy, and the impact on fish and fisheries; and the effects of ghost fish gear, and the implications of conservation measures and international treaties, e.g., the High Seas Treaty also known as the BBNJ Agreement.

By reaching into the lives and experiences of people working in the seafood industry and calling attention to the treatment of marine species worldwide, George presents an empathetic and informative account of a major global activity. It is easy to be gripped by her storytelling approach and writing style and become very concerned about the state of fisheries and deteriorating ocean ecosystems. George concludes the book on a positive note, though. "We are not helpless," she states. "Better data will help: It will help us understand what fishing boats are actually up to; it will help us understand more precisely how fish are doing; it will help everything" (p. 242). To aid readers in making decisions about which fish to consume, she included a helpful guide of resources to check. The book is well-documented with many citations and a select bibliography that includes studies by noted Canadian researchers, e.g., Daniel Pauly (University of British Columbia) and Boris Worm (Dalhousie University). Minor errors (e.g., reference

to Labrador as a "Canadian province" p. 46) and the poorly printed photographs notwithstanding, this book is recommended to all members of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science and to readers everywhere who are interested in marine ecosystems and environments.

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