A Planet Under Pressure: Citizens and Scientists Taking Action on Global Warming and Other Threats

A David and Cecilia Ting Endowment
2011-2012 Film and Lecture Series

Thursday April 12, 2012, 7–9 pm
Room 1800, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings, Vancouver, BC

Saving Nemo: The science of marine extinctions
Presented by Nicholas Dulvy, Canada Research Chair in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation, Biological Sciences, Simon Fraser University

Abstract:
Ten thousand years ago the most recent geological epoch was defined by the discovery of agriculture. In this short space of time we have put one third of the Earth’s ice-free land to the plough. In an even shorter space of time, over the last century, we have turned our technology to sieving the ocean for wild food. The supermarket shelf tells us that the oceans are inexhaustible, but without science we can never hope to know differently. Fisheries catches are stagnating and the seas are warming, raising questions as to whether we face the end of the oceans as we know them. There is no doubt that we have drawn heavily from our oceans to feed millions of people, but the question is whether we have done irreversible harm to the biodiversity of our seas? Here, I tell a travelogue of my wanders from library archives to some of the most remote islands and coasts in the world to bring back a story of the state of the oceans, and the possible futures of marine biodiversity.

Bio-Sketch:
Nicholas Dulvy completed his B.Sc. in Animal Zoology at the University of Birmingham, UK before taking up a position as scientific officer for an expedition to Mafia Island, Tanzania. He completed his Ph.D. in evolutionary ecology at the University of East Anglia, UK in 1999, before moving to Fiji to begin a Postdoctoral Fellowship on “Alternate stable states of coral reefs”. On his return, in 2000 he became a lecturer at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK. In 2003, Nick became a policy advisor and research scientist at the UK government fisheries agency. Nick came to the Department of Biological Sciences, SFU in 2008 as a Canada Research Chair in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation.

He is the Co-Chair of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Shark Specialist Group – a global volunteer network of around 171 scientists and experts from 55 countries in 12 ocean regions. The SSG has a mission: “to secure the conservation, management and recovery of the world’s sharks, rays and chimaeras through the mobilisation of global technical expertise”.

The focus of his research is to understand the nature and scale of global change using comparative analyses of populations, communities and ecosystems along temporal and spatial gradients of human impact. He has published over eighty peer-reviewed papers and book chapters on life histories, extinction risk, ecosystem impacts of fishing and the ecological and socioeconomic consequences of climate change.

In 2009 he was presented with the Zoological Society of London’s Marsh Award for Marine and Freshwater Conservation which is awarded for “contributions of fundamental science and its application to the conservation in marine and/or freshwater ecosystems”. The award citation was for “research on the effects of climate change on fisheries and coastal communities, as well as threat and extinction risks in the context of improving fisheries management”. In 2010, he was made a Conservation Fellow of the Zoological Society of London, an award “to honour individuals who have made exceptional contributions to conservation”.

Reservations: www.sfu.ca/reserve