

# Picture Fishing: An FAQ

## *1. Who can participate in Picture Fishing?*

Easy answer: Anyone with imagination and an image to share.

So far, most expressions of interest have come from people who straddle academia and activism. In many cases, it seems that many of us who study and work with fishers/fisheries have also taken many a photo already; we are happy if Picture Fishing can serve as an outlet. We also are particularly keen to engage with people in ongoing projects to specifically generate new imagery (as opposed to only combing old archives). For example, if you're a PhD student planning a future trip to "the field," we'd love to hear from you.

We're also actively recruiting contributions from fishers themselves (or even policy makers/managers). We have some ideas about how to make that happen and would be open to specific collaboration. If you are a fisher with images to share, or if you work with fishers and could potentially engage them as collaborators in Picture Fishing, we especially encourage you to reach out.

## *2. What's the timeline for the project and any publications?*

Picture Fishing (that's how we shorthand it) is already ongoing with multiple intended "outputs." We've had dozens of expressions of interest — which is why we've been a little slow to respond — and we hope that only continues.

At this initial phase, we're primarily trying to build a network of contributors and collaborators, but we are envisioning this as less of a discrete project (i.e. a single web site or book or presentation) and more as an initiative (with open-ended outputs and timelines). Once we've collected an initial set of contributions — images and text — our goal is to roll-out an interactive internet portal/display. As a first step, this web presence (right now, a planned world map that will allow users to tour fisheries diversity visually) will then become an ever-expanding archive of the initiative for the foreseeable future. We intend to launch this by late summer 2018.

Another upcoming milestone is the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Small-Scale Fisheries Congress in Thailand in October 2018. Picture Fishing will be presented formally in an interactive Science Cafe session during the congress. We hope that contributors and collaborators — some of whom we imagine will already be attending the 3WSFC — can join us.

Finally, based upon an initial set of contributions, we expect to publish an academic framing paper outlining some of our ideas and arguments and grappling with questions that engage:

- the fishery as a political ecology
- performativity/performance of diversity in fisheries

- imagination/imaginary in fisheries and related phenomena such as problem closure or the reductions of the model
- the image and its power as well as problem
- concrete policy/activism engagements and the actual work needed to perform alternatives.

We expect that such a paper would build on conversations before and during 3WSFC, and be published soon (relatively) after.

Beyond this rough timeline for the second half of 2018, the life of Picture Fishing will depend very much on collaboration (and possibly funding).

We have ideas about what comes next or eventually (e.g. exhibits and a book) but we also hope Picture Fishing evolves via joint, multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, team-oriented science and politics.

### *3. How do I participate in Picture Fishing?*

The primary material contribution we want are beautiful photos that tell a story or highlight an aspect of the diversity of fisheries, accompanied by some kind of short-ish treatment in words. Sound vague? We're intentionally interested in getting the broadest range of contributions from the broadest range of contributors.

The first step, then, is to identify beautiful, telling images of fisheries diversity from anywhere in the world of any scale and social relations. The project revolves around "performing" fisheries diversity in the first order by highlighting actually existing diversity and connecting such images of extant fisheries with a broader imaginary — for fishers, policy, scientists and consumers.

Note: That centers and privileges the image, but we're open to broad interpretation of what constitutes said image. We suspect most contributions will be photographs but we hope for a range of documentary forms — from video to maps to charts to graphs. There are no formalist boundaries.

Contributions should be restricted to no more than five images — preferably of distinct variety — that contribute to a cohesive narrative, description or argument (which you will also need to tie together in text). While imagery broadly describing a fishery is acceptable, we're also happy to see collections of images that focus on one facet, experience, ecology, position, etc. For example, while many images may tell the story of an artisanal mud crab fishery, we can easily envision a series of images that focus exclusively on the setting and people involved preparation and consumption of said crabs as dinner.

You do need to possess the copyright to contributions (or have explicit, written permission of the copyright holder) such that you can legally "publish" the images on the future Picture Fishing web portal. Copyrights with respect to web publication will remain with the holder.

More importantly (in our eyes), contributors should

- a) have permission of any clearly identifiable subjects of private or individual images, and
- b) have given sufficient ethical consideration to the reproduction of public, landscape or group images.

In short, to contribute an image, we require that you confirm that we can reproduce images legally and ethically online. We're happy to have a longer and more detailed conversation about what ethical publication of imagery entails, beyond the legal formalism. Indeed, we expect that the ethics of this kind of performance is a topic we will take up in analysis (given that at least some fishers we know rather wish to remain illegible in many ways).

Other, future publication formats — e.g. journal articles or an eventual book or in a gallery — may entail further copyright or republication concerns which shall be addressed/negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Our desire is for rights of imagery to either remain with the creator, the subject and/or enter the commons, but such decisions will be specified and made clear in their context (e.g. Does a particular book publisher require that rights be ceded? How many contributors are OK with that in relation to a specific type of book?)

When you have your submission firmly in mind, you should use the Google Form linked from [picturefishing.com](http://picturefishing.com). Note that for workflow reasons, you have to sign in with a Google Account to submit. If this is a problem, send an e-mail to [ajadhav@berkeley.edu](mailto:ajadhav@berkeley.edu).

#### *4. Are there technical requirements to contribute? What if I don't have a great camera or am not that great at photography?*

We are certainly willing to accept any and all “levels” of imagery for this project. We do not want to impose any rigorous standards for “correct” photography at the outset or otherwise over-regulate a contributor’s sense of aesthetic or analytic value. If you think an image has power or beauty, that is enough at this stage, particularly for internet representation.

That said, this project also embraces the performative power of the image which in turn does emphasize a certain amount of aesthetic or compelling quality to the imagery we seek. This reflects both our commitment to the image’s ability to move a viewer, create an imaginary and tell a story, as well as the practical reality that any future publishing in physical formats will require us to select a subset of the “most” compelling, interesting, analytically important and/or aesthetically pleasing. In cases such as a physical book, we will likely weigh photographs for technical and aesthetic merit along with their analytic “value.” This could involve a kind of peer review by a jury that will include contributors as well as some professional photographers.

With respect to photography, we encourage submissions with images that are diverse in shot, angle, foci, emphasis, background, color, subject, etc., in line with good photojournalistic practice (one of us was a journalist once upon a time). Think of the common refrain of shot selection of “wide, medium, tight.” You are welcome to edit images via cropping and minor digital adjustments, so long as such edits don’t warp the reality or content conveyed; imagery with major adjustments must be clearly identified as an illustration, and nonetheless should not contain severe distortions or manipulations that are not self-evident. In other words, no “Photoshopping” of images to blatantly misrepresent. Other, non-photographic imagery should still conform to basic conventions of that format. For example, maps should be appropriately labeled and use an appropriate projection based on their purpose and content.

In all cases, we will likely apply a light touch of finishing/editing/cropping to submissions in line with the above discussion. We will contact contributors if we are making major adjustments to any image.

We recommend that submissions be of the highest digital resolution and file size — e.g. an un-sampled TIF format or, failing that, a high-quality, low-compression JPG — for all production uses. We do not need camera-specific RAW formats, but otherwise wish to see images at their highest actual resolution and quality. At this time, we can accept individual files as large as 10MB; if you wish to submit a larger file size, contact us first.

### *5. You said something about text to go along with the imagery?*

At this stage, we are open to a wide range of styles of text to accompany images. Ideally, contributors will submit a well-drafted version, but at minimum we expect a kind of concept note for text to see enhance the story or provide light analysis of the images submitted.

This text might be akin to an extended caption in that it primarily describes further the content of the images, but contributors may also offer analysis, theory or argument regarding image content — perhaps implying why the image(s) were submitted — and its relation specifically to fisheries diversity, performance, synoptic reduction, imaginaries, etc. (as we’ve begun to argue in various statements of this project, including this FAQ). We do not want to hem contributors in to any narrow statement, but the text and image combination should, in broad terms, speak to the project’s themes and politics.

Write as though your submission will be read in isolation; you should NOT make explicit reference to the existence of the larger project. We also prefer third-person voice, though recognize there may be important, arguable exceptions. Brevity and clarity will be paramount as textual treatments should be limited to 500 words (yes, we recognize that is short for many academics). This text should include citations as needed in parenthetical in-text citations in the author date format with a full reference list at the end. The reference list will not count toward word count.

Expect that text contributions will be edited at least lightly. Please do your best to clean the text of basic grammar/copy errors before web publication and that some basic conventions may be standardized (e.g. SSF on first reference for small-scale fisheries). However, contributors may also be asked for revisions or clarifications now or in the future (e.g. if needed for other publication or presentation formats).

We would love for Picture Fishing to be a multi-lingual project, decentering Anglophone thinking and performance. Unfortunately, we are not equipped for that task and therefore as of now require submissions in English, though we're open to collaboration in that regard. If you are not a native-English speaker and struggle to write as one, please indicate that in the submission and we'll gladly work with you.

## *6. How are you defining a fishery?*

Broadly. We take the fishery to be the social, political, economic, technological, epistemic, cosmological, managerial and ecological web of relations and meaning that arises when humans depend on, make and are made by fish. Broad enough for you?

One of our most basic arguments of Picture Fishing — which underpins our normative commitments— is that the fishery is so, so, so much more than a collection of capital or boats or workers. When that narrow definition is exploded into the reality of fishing, we believe diversity can obtain and flourish.

What does that mean in terms of imagery? While we certainly welcome imagery that represents much of the traditional aesthetic of fisheries — boats, nets, fish, glistening water, straining muscles, vibrant color, stark environments, etc. — we also hope contributors expand their (and our) imaginaries of fishing gear, work, tradition, politics, natures and threats. That may mean kitchens, festivals, marriages, funerals, protests, laboratories, meeting halls, parliaments, etc. We also welcome the non-photographic image so long as it still imagines and, potentially, performs. That might include maps, charts, GIS exports, paintings and so on.

## *7. Is this an argument that small is beautiful? Are large-scale fisheries a part of fishing diversity?*

We argue for value and worth that is intrinsically tied fisheries diversity, and we take seriously the claim — grounded in reality — that diversity is so much more common in SSF. The experience of many fishers, activists and researchers, simply put, is that the multiple, potential and extant values of diverse SSF are generally overlooked and threatened. The need for increased attention, protection and conservation of such diversity has been the impetus for political struggle and negotiation globally, culminating in the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication.

Yet Picture Fishing is NOT a project of blindly valorizing all SSF by default. For example, small-scale fisheries can be unsustainable or inequitable, often because of larger forces of political economy or sociopolitical structures. We are interested in

imagery that highlights the degradations of SSF, problematizes them or casts a critical spotlight. And we would certainly welcome imagery and imaginaries of the humanity and emancipation possible in diverse larger-scale fishing.

However, we also argue that the “scale” of current or future fisheries is not reducible to an either/or framing. To valorize the potential of diverse fisheries is not the same as ignoring the reality of increasing industrialization or the scaling-up of many fisheries, sometimes with participation of SSF fishers themselves. For the academics reading here, we feel the need to acknowledge the sometimes-heated debate on this subject between camps of critical political economy. We are sympathetic to the argument (often from various Marxist corners) that the logics of capital and capitalism structure the vast majority of human activity on the planet — including in fisheries. Industrial and neoliberal capitalism is the dominant form of relations between human and non-human natures. Yet we are also compelled by the insistence of many other scholars (including Marxists) that capital is never totalizing and that looking for non/quasi/anti-capitalisms is a critical praxis. J.K. Gibson-Graham, of course, deserves a singular mention here as our primary inspiration, but she is only one of a community of scholars to make this argument. In sum, *Picture Fishing* is built on both political economic critiques and the tensions between them is, for us, fruitful.

In any case, there is no clear dividing line or binary between scales of the fishery. Definitions of SSF are rarely satisfactory in the abstract, and, in any case, we struggle to consider “small” without also considering “large.” For one, it’s difficult to even think of a fishery of any scale in any geography that does not at least have global capitalism as at least a partial referent. In many geographies, even relatively clear conceptual demarcations between SSF and larger-scale fisheries are most often fuzzy in actual practice, when for example both scales operate in the same territory or when small-scale fishers trade their own craft seasonally for work laboring on larger boats. Nor should larger-scale fisheries — usually understood narrowly in techno-economic terms — by default be consigned to a totalizing capitalist homogeneity (even if they increasingly are). For the work of *Picture Fishing*, we welcome engagements with and representations of all fisheries that show their diverse humanity and broader social, political and ecological dimensions.

That said, we also remain convinced that increasing capitalist extraction in fisheries does indeed tack toward homogeneity of techno-economic form, while occluding variation. In that sense, larger-scale fisheries can often be anathema and threatening to the diversity we seek to highlight.

## *8. How did this get started?*

*Picture Fishing* grew out of an ongoing conversation and train of thought re: conservation, management and development policy in SSF. It has been particularly informed by engagements in India (where a lot of our experience is) and both the policy/knowledge context in which we work as well as our actual praxis as researchers and activists.

On the one hand, we've spent years documenting and photographing fisheries (again, mostly in India). Our conversations (actual and metaphorical, via literature) with fisheries researchers around the globe suggest that many researchers and activists are engaged in similar practices with a variety of motivations. In other words, there are a lot of "us" out there studying and/or advocating what fisheries are and/or could be. And many of "us" invariably take pictures. What if those pictures could be put together to tell global stories and yield global insights?

But putting such images "to use" is not our sole or even primary motivation. Our conversations and thinking almost immediately have drifted from "imaging" the fishery to "imagining" the fishery. Within our imagination of fisheries — specifically, diverse fisheries — sits a critique of what we argue is the limited imagination of development, economics, and, yes, even conservation policy. A central question then: Whose imagination of the fishery can or should become reality? Which imaginary can or should be performed? And how?

Thinking with and against those questions is how we got here. And the response so far — from activists and academics and even fishers themselves — has been tremendously encouraging.

*8. What if I have other questions, concerns, comments or critiques?*

E-mail [ajadhav@berkeley.edu](mailto:ajadhav@berkeley.edu) with any unanswered pre-submission questions or post-submission clarifications.

Please include "Picture Fishing:" as a prefix in your e-mail subject in all cases.