Exclusive Economic Zone Encyclopedia Article

Exclusive Economic Zone

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Exclusive Economic Zone

The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is a 200-mile boundary off the coasts of a nation that provides the exclusive right to fish, mine, and otherwise utilize the **natural resources** located within the zone. After World War II, many nations became concerned about the intrusion of foreign fishing vessels into the rich and productive waters off of their coasts. The 1958 Convention on Fishing and Conservation of Living Resources of the High Seas, established rules that allowed a coastal nation impose terms on the uses of natural resources of their coastal oceans. This effort at regulation was unsuccessful, and the rules were never put in place. The policy that ultimately established exclusive economic zones around sovereign nations resulted from provisions of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, held in 1973. As a result of the actions taken in 1958, virtually all of the world's fisheries are controlled by one nation or another. However, the controlling nation must provide access to the resources that it cannot harvest, and is responsible for preventing **pollution** and depletion of the resources in the waters that it controls. In the United States, the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 established the fishery conservation zone out to 200 miles, however, it wasn't until 1983 that the EEZ was created by presidential proclamation.