

Study: Rising temps put sea life at risk

THESSALONIKI, Greece, Jan. 5 (UPI) -- Temperatures rising a few degrees in the Mediterranean Sea could kill its fish population in vast numbers, a Greek University said.

Researchers from Aristotle University in Thessaloniki said they established the impact that a rise in sea temperatures and an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the water would have on sea life, ekathimerini.com said.

"We are researching the lowest temperature above which the effect on fish will be seen," lead researcher Vassilis Michailidis said. "It is especially important that the tolerance levels of the organism to changes in their environment be established."

Earth's average temperature rose by up to 1 degree F during the last few years and is predicted to increase by as much as 5 degrees F over the next few decades -- enough to kill fish in Greek seas, the researchers said.

Fish in the Mediterranean ideally live in temperatures between 64 degrees F and 75 degrees F, Michailidis said. Above 78 degrees F, fish do not take in enough oxygen. At temperatures above 84 degrees F, their cardiac systems fail, he said.

Scientists said increased amounts of carbon dioxide in seawater also threaten sea life because water would be more acidic.

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