Title: The Commons   name_____

Introduction: In the old English system, a commons was a central area where everyone in a village could graze their livestock. The sea is a commons, also. The open ocean is available to any country with access to a shoreline or who can get access to a shoreline. Whenever people share an area, issues arise. In this activity, you will use a model of the commons to discover what people need to do to maintain a sustainable harvest of fish.

Materials: toothpicks, whiteboard

Procedure:

1. Your group is a "nation". Elect a president to speak for you, a fisherperson to fish for you, a secretary to scribe for you and a treasurer to do the math.
2. Each toothpick on the floor represents a fish. You need enough fish to feed your population. If there are 4 of you, you need 4 fish. Your fisherperson will go fishing by picking up the fish in the National Fishing Boat. The fisherperson will have 1 minute to go fishing and must keep his or herself seated in the chair, which has now turned into a boat.
3. If you catch more fish than you need, you may sell fish for $2 apiece. If you want to buy another boat, it will cost $20.
4. Fish left in the ocean will reproduce before the next round. Scientists have studied the fish and discovered that one new fish survives its hatching and growing stage for every two in the ocean.
5. At the end of each "fishing season" the fish will be counted from each nation and a discussion at the United Nations will occur.
6. Write your number of fish and total money on the chart your teacher provides.

Data

Year	# of fish	Money made this year	Total Money	# of boats
start	0	0	0	1
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

Analysis:

1. Who won?   Why?

2. What are the "commons"?

3. Who is responsible for the outcome?

4. Was the outcome preventable?

5. Why didn't you prevent the outcome?

6. What other resource use could be modeled in this game?

7. What effect will the loss of fish have on the ocean ecosystem?

8. What would you do differently if we played again?

Conclusion: What lessons did you learn from this simulation?