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Herald View: Global warming could lead to new collapse of our fish stocks

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WILDLIFE fans who watched the BBC’s extraordinary Blue Planet last weekend could not have been unmoved by the footage of a walrus mother struggling to protect her baby from hungry polar bears on ice melting away due to global warming.

And while the fate of cod, herring and haddock might not result in a narrative that pulls the heartstrings in the same way, the latest research on these fish makes for shocking reading.

According to researchers at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), all three species could vanish from the west coast by the turn of the next century in search of cooler waters.

Our seas, according to scientists, are likely to warm significantly over the next 80 years, and although other species of white fish such as saithe, hake and whiting are still likely to be attracted, the fish that have traditionally filled our waters - and that we so love to eat - will have disappeared. Grey seal numbers could also be badly affected.

The SAMS findings are particularly concerning because stocks of haddock, cod and herring have only just recovered after years of overfishing. Marine ecologists are now highlighting the importance of considering environmental change as well as quotas to achieve sustainable fisheries. Let us hope that ministers in **Edinburgh** and London are taking note.

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