

Fish

Unsustainable Fishing

Valuable fish stocks, as well as a whole host of other marine life, are severely threatened by overfishing. The global fishing fleet is **2-3 times larger** than what the oceans can sustainably support. In other words, people are taking far more fish out of the ocean than can be replaced by those remaining.

As a result of overfishing:

- **53%** of the world's fisheries are fully exploited, and **32%** are overexploited, depleted, or recovering from depletion
- Most of the top ten marine fisheries, accounting for about **30%** of all capture fisheries production, are fully exploited or overexploited
- Several important commercial fish populations have declined to the point where their survival is threatened

Many fishers are well aware of the need to safeguard fish populations and the marine environment. However, the greed and waste of some large commercial fleets combined with modern developments in fishing technology have had an enormous effect on fishing worldwide.

Why Fish Farming is Unsustainable and Harming the Planet

What's The Problem?

Roughly half of the seafood people consume is produced using aquaculture, or 'factory' fish farming, methods, and it's no accident that the former term has been adopted by the bodies involved. Fish farms involve cages on huge scales in order to maximize profit. Some fish farms use small, overcrowded cages akin to battery hen method, which 'open ocean' or 'offshore aquaculture' involves growing fish in isolated large cages in the ocean, far from the coastline.

The Environmental & Animal Impacts

Farmed fish escape and contaminate other sea life, spreading diseases and parasites to wild fish and marine life. Farmed fish also breed with wild fish, which contaminates non-farmed sources of fish and leads to decreased genetic pools. Farmed fish also out-compete wild fish in some cases, leading to population decline of healthy, natural fish.

Farmed fish are being fed soy, which they would never encounter in their natural environments and is likely causing them long-term damage. Soy is nutritionally poor compared to the variety of smaller fish and other sea creatures that an average fish would consume, but it's a very cheap option for the fish farmers, who require cheap food to feed over 200 million fish in offshore cages each year.

Farmed soy-fed fish also produce more waste than wild fish, which leads to an increase in oceanic pollution and again raises contamination risks of other sea life species.

Who's The Culprit?

Soy and fish farming are immensely profitable businesses for those involved. Soybean companies and trade associations benefit from soy-fed fish farming. The Illinois Soybean Association stated that fish farming that will 'revolutionize sustainable agriculture', and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also support fish farming methods.