

Help Make a Change: Support Sustainable Fish

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Cooking fish is a true joy. Eating fish is equally rewarding. Fish, with all its healthy fats, essential oils, and nutrients, fits in nicely in a balanced diet. However, on an exceptionally primeval level, it just tastes first-rate. The fishing industry is gigantic. I mean worldwide, vital to the survival of humankind, gigantic. All right, that last bit was a little hyperbole, but not much.

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These days, with everyone wanting to “live green,” one of the issues that does not get enough publicity is the sustainability of fish. Our oceans are in crisis. Oceans supply us with food, help normalize our climate, and provide a source of revenue for millions of people. Humans have been fishing the ocean for thousands of years. Nevertheless, technology has allowed us to fish deeper and farther than ever before. Some methods are incredibly efficient, while others have us on the verge of disaster.

Dredging the ocean bottom with tires and chain-mesh is are the principal method for harvesting groundfish, scallops, and clams. Many marine biologists believe that this method of fishing harms the ocean more than any other endeavor. As with countless other issues in life, there are conflicting reports about the long term

damage being done by this method. However, incidental catch, net-pen farming, habitat modification, and ocean dumping are undoubtedly having a caustic effect on the oceans' ecosystems.


When purchasing fish I always look for line-caught products. Catching fish by longline, hook and line, or turtle-safe and dolphin-safe nets is far less damaging to the ocean environment.

Overfishing of certain types of fish is another big concern. The ocean cannot provide an infinite supply of fish. If a fish is caught at a much faster rate than it can reproduce... there will come a time when it will cease to exist. A good example is Chilean Sea Bass. That is a marketing moniker, by the way: the real name of that particular species of fish is Patagonian Toothfish. This fish has enjoyed intense popularity in the restaurant industry mainly because it is an especially lenient fish to cook. The flesh can withstand longer cooking times without drying out. As you can imagine, this makes it very attractive to lazy, incompetent cooks looking for an easy way out.

This article does not scratch the surface of the growing problem. It is my genuine hope that you will continue to educate yourself about the current status of our oceans and the fish we eat. Here is a short list of many wonderful sustainable fish we can enjoy: Arctic Char (farmed), Albacore Tuna (pole-caught), Freshwater Coho Salmon (farmed in US), Bay Scallops (farmed), Crawfish (farmed in US), Dungeness Crab (wild-caught US), Pacific Cod (longline caught Alaska), Spot Prawns (wild-caught British Columbia), and Hand-Diver Sea Scallops.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium has an amazingly detailed [website](#) offering guides to seafood. On their site you will find comprehensive studies on what seafood to avoid, great alternatives, and much more. In addition, Rick Moonen is one of America's finest chefs. His wonderful book, *Fish Without a Doubt*, is an ode to the cooking of seafood. He offers numerous fantastic recipes for cooking tasty, sustainable fish.

The ocean is a treasure trove of astounding delights. Do your part to ensure that future generations can derive pleasure from what it has to offer. You want to be able to point at a time in history and proudly declare that you were on the right side of the ledger. The time is now. Stand up and be counted.

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