

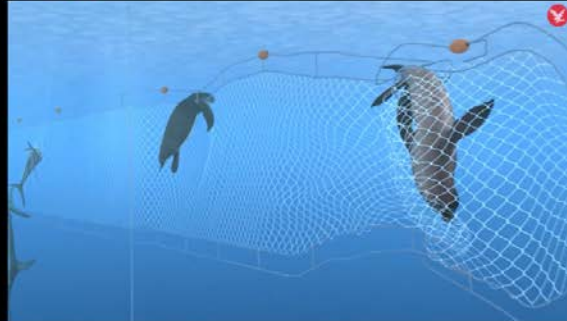
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Environment

More than one third of fish caught never make it to human stomachs

New study reveals waste from global production is soaring

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Only two thirds of the fish actually make it to the plate, a report on the world's fisheries and aquaculture has revealed.

According to the **biannual report from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations, 35 per cent of global catches are either thrown back into the ocean because they are of an undesirable size or species, or because they rot before they can be eaten.

Experts have also raised concerns over collusion losses and the sustainability of current **fishing** operations around the world. Total production has reached a record high thanks to the rise in fish farming, particularly in China.

“Since 1961 the annual global growth in fish consumption has been twice as high as population growth, demonstrating that the fisheries sector is crucial in meeting the FAO's goal of a world without hunger and malnutrition,” said José Graziano da Silva, FAO director general.



Billions of people eat fish regularly - yet a third of catches still go to waste (Maggie's Fish Restaurant)

With billions of people relying on the nutritional benefits of fish, Lasse Gustavsson, executive director of Oceana in Europe, said more needs to be done to crackdown on wasteful practices. It is believed many of the 60 million people working in aquaculture lack the proper knowledge or equipment required to keep the fish fresh until they reach the consumer.

“Food waste on a hungry planet is outrageous,” he said. “The fact that one-third of all fish caught goes to waste is a huge cause for concern for global food security.”

The FAO study found while a third of commercial fish species are overfished, the amount of wild-caught fish has barely changed since the late 1980s.

Developing countries are being offered assistance by the FAO to cut the number of losses, and the use of raised racks for fish drying resulted in a 50 per cent drop in losses of fish from Lake Tanganyika in Africa. Meanwhile, better facilities for handling the crab harvest saw losses fall by 40 per cent around the Indian Ocean.

"There's too much pressure on marine resources and we need significantly more commitments from governments to improve the state of their fisheries," said Manuel Barange, director of the FAO fisheries and aquaculture department.

"We predict that Africa will have to import fish in the future," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, adding shortages could lead to higher prices, disproportionately affecting the poor.

"The crisis of [overfishing] will be hard to solve," Daniel Pauly, at the Sea Around Us research initiative at the University of British Columbia, Canada, told The Guardian. "However, collaborations between different stakeholders may help turn around some of the negative trends. This is the best issue of [the FAO fisheries report] that I have ever read."

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