

Humans have been fishing for thousands of years, but in the last few decades, we have created



technologies that have allowed us to fish deeper, further, and more efficiently than ever. As a result, commercial fishing has caused dramatic fluctuations in fish populations that could lead to a total collapse in their numbers and the entire ocean ecosystem. As the demand for seafood continues to increase, the only solution to prevent the destruction of the oceanic environment is sustainable seafood.

What is sustainable seafood?

Seafood that is fished or farmed in a manner that does not jeopardize the long-term structure and function of that ecosystem

How is our seafood caught today?

Seafood is either wild caught or farmed.

Farmed seafood is from **aquaculture**, the process of breeding, raising, and harvesting fish or shellfish in ponds, lakes, rivers, or the ocean. Half of the seafood eaten worldwide is farmed today.

Wild caught seafood comes from **commercial fisheries** that use Fishing methods such as purse seining, bottom trawling, long lining, and gillnetting, some of which are highly detrimental to the ocean ecosystem and causing huge collateral damage to the environment.

What kind of collateral damage is done to the environment due to seafood production?

Overfishing: to fish a body of water to an extent that it upsets the ecological balance of the ecosystem. It is reported that 75% of fisheries are fishing at or over capacity

Bycatch: accidentally capturing different species while fishing for a specific species. By catch is inevitable; when techniques used are so effective at capturing all species, sea turtles, dolphins, sea otters, sharks, sea birds, etc. getting caught in nets and drowning become a common occurrence.



Disruption of the natural ecosystem: Scientific research has found that bottom trawling is one of the most destructive human actions to oceans, as it drags and kills vast amounts of corals, fish, sponges, etc. along the bottom floor. Killing essential species of an ecosystem, such as coral, is destroying entire habitats for hundreds of different creatures.

Particle run-off: Aquaculture farms have difficulty with pollutants, nutrients, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals that seep into surrounding environments and change the natural biochemical balance of the system.



What is our campus doing?

UC Santa Cruz is committed to providing sustainable food products to students so they may enjoy delicious, fresh, and healthy meals. In order to reach the Real Food Commitment of 40% Real food by 2020, signed by the Chancellor in 2011, the Food Systems Working Group has worked with UCSC Dining and a myriad of NGOs to find the most sustainable and local seafood sources. At least 50% of the seafood in the dining halls has been caught in an ecologically sound manner.



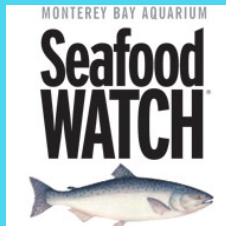
What can I do to help?

Every single one of us has the power to save our oceans and start a movement for ecologically sound seafood. Here are some steps on how to get started:

Eat lower on the food chain. Species that are plentiful and lower on the food chain are able to reproduce quickly and sustain their populations. Lower food chain fish include sardines, anchovies, mussels, oysters, and wild Alaskan salmon.

Learn about where your food comes from.

The greatest form of combating unsustainable and destructive fishing and farming methods is becoming familiar with where and how your seafood was harvested. Today, this can be easily accomplished through eco-labels and guides, which are designed to help us make informed choices about supporting sustainable food sources. Buying from local fish markets is also an easy way to support small-scale fishermen and know exactly where your seafood is coming from!



Ask restaurants and supermarkets to provide sustainably sourced seafood. As consumers, we have the right to consume food that nourishes not only our bodies but the environment as well! Asking businesses to serve ecologically sound seafood will show that consumers care about the environment and support businesses that care about it too.

Get involved with the Food Systems Working Group!

The Food Systems Working Group (FSWG) is a student led organization on campus that is working hard everyday to obtain healthy, ecologically sound, fair trade, and local food for UC Santa Cruz. The chance is here and now for you to start a movement for a sustainable food system! Email us at ucscfswg@gmail.com or call 831-459-3675

Fun facts:

- 93% of seafood is imported into the United States annually
- 1/3 of seafood sold in supermarkets and restaurants are mislabeled today
- Scientists believe that up to 90% of top predatory fish species, such as sharks, have been removed from the ocean due to commercial fishing

More information on sustainable seafood at these websites:

www.montereybayaquarium.org

www.fishwatch.gov

www.mdc.org



Food Systems Working Group Education and Engagement Series

WHAT IS
SUSTAINABLE
SEAFOOD?

