

**Dateline Earth**

<http://blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/environment/archives/138771.asp>

**Should you become a 'bottomfeeder' to help Puget Sound and the oceans?**

Listening to [KUOW's Weekday](#) this morning, we were reminded of words we wrote in 2004:

It's your wedding anniversary, so you go out for seafood. As you and your mate reflect on your years together, you're both salivating in anticipation of a fine meal of ...

Jellyfish?



Look, ma -- dinner! *Paul Joseph Brown/P-I*

The occasion then was [Daniel Pauly's](#) address to the World Fisheries Congress, in which the distinguished University of British Columbia researcher recounted how in Third World countries, consumers of seafood are turning increasingly to the lower [trophic levels](#), meaning the likes of sea cucumbers and sea urchins -- "stuff that eats dirt," as Pauly noted. In the not-too-distant future, we reported in 2004, such delectables could be commonplace, according to Pauly:

When we first presented this, it was a joke -- you're going to have a jellyfish sandwich. The journalists all ate it up -- not the jellyfish, the quote. It was a joke, but now it's real.

Today on KUOW, author [Taras Grescoe](#) was flogging his [new book](#), "Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood." And guess what he was recommending? Yep. Jellyfish.

He recalled being in Shanghai and eating an appetizer of jellyfish served cold with doused with toasted sesame oil and sprinkled with sesame seeds:

You're doing a public service by eating them. There are just too many of them now. Because we've taken away the top predators, they're proliferating.

He compared eating jellyfish to swatting malaria-carrying mosquitoes:

It's not a huge help for the ocean, but it's a lot better than eating bluefin tuna.

Recent "jellyfish plagues" included a bunch washing up on Italy's tourist-packed beaches and in Ireland -- which used to be too far north for the stingers that came in recently, Grescoe said:

The oceans really are changing and they're changing a lot because of the removal of the big predator fish.

He is *way* down on fish farming, and understands how dumb it is to [catch a bunch of wild fish to feed to farmed fish](#). (Grescoe did allow that there are a few bright spots in the aquaculture industry, including a salmon farmer in British Columbia who is raising fish inland, away from where they can harm the ocean and the wild fish in it.)

Grescoe visited the Fulton Fish Market in New York City, where swordfish of 200 pounds were once common. Now they're more like 40 pounds.

There are, as we've [pointed out in Puget Sound](#), some positive aspects of a changing ocean. Grescoe mentioned the explosion in lobster that followed the collapse of the completely overfished cod stocks in the North Atlantic.

Grescoe discovered, [as has the Dateline Earth team](#), that when you press scientists about what can be done on this issue, you're pretty quickly sent in the direction of [marine protected areas](#) -- places where we just stop fishing. For example, he pointed to the Atlantic off Cape Canaveral in Florida, which was closed to fishing for decades as a security measure for the Kennedy Space Center. There, the big fish remain.

In New Zealand, Grescoe said, fishermen initially opposed the imposition of marine protected areas but now support them because they serve as nursery areas for the fish that feed us.

Don't like jellyfish? Grescoe does like sardines, too, which are pretty low on the totem pole, and eat plankton. There must be some other choices. Guess we'll have to buy the book. Grescoe's hope:

By eating ethically here in North America, we can really make a real change.

The last one-third of the program was devoted to the [Seattle Times' series this week](#) on Puget Sound, which we'll touch back on once it wraps up tomorrow.

Posted by [Robert McClure](#) at May 13, 2008 12:37 p.m.

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