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Alarming New Study: World's Fish Catches Are Being Wasted As Animal Feed

February 1, 2009 by [admin](#)



An alarming new study to be published in November in the Annual Review of Environment and Resources finds that one-third of the world's marine fish catches are ground up and fed to farm-raised fish, pigs, and poultry, squandering a precious food resource for humans and disregarding the serious overfishing crisis in our oceans.

Lead author Dr. Jacqueline Alder, senior author Dr. Daniel Pauly, and colleagues urge that other foods be used to feed farmed animals so that these "forage fish" can be brought to market for larger-scale human consumption. "Forage fish" include anchovies, sardines, menhaden, and other small - to medium -sized fish

species which are the primary food for ocean-dwelling marine mammals, seabirds (especially puffins and gulls) and several large fishes.

Currently, catches of forage fish are predominantly used in animal feed, but these species are highly nutritious and well-suited for direct human consumption.

“We need to stop using so many small ocean fish to feed farmed fish and other animals,” Alder said. “These small, tasty fish could instead feed people. Society should demand that we stop wasting these fish on farmed fish, pigs, and poultry.” Although feeds derived from soy and other land-based crops are available and are used, fishmeal and fish oil have skyrocketed in popularity because forage fish are easy to catch in large numbers, and hence, relatively inexpensive.

Entitled “Forage Fish: From Ecosystems to Markets,” the study is a product of the nine-year Sea Around Us Project, a partnership between the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Sea Around Us Project has been primarily funded by the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, which is now the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University. The abstract is available online at <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/toc/energy/33/1>

“It defies reason to drain the ocean of small, wild fishes that could be directly consumed by people in order to produce a lesser quantity of farmed fish,” said Dr. Ellen K. Pikitch, executive director of the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science and a Professor at Stony Brook University’s School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences. “Skyrocketing pressure on small wild fishes may be putting entire marine food webs at great risk.” Forage fish account for a staggering 37 percent (31.5 million tonnes) of all fish taken from the world’s oceans each year, and 90 percent of that catch is processed into fishmeal and fish oil. In 2002, 46 percent of fishmeal and fish oil was used as feed for aquaculture (fish-farming), 24 percent for pig feed, and 22 percent for poultry feed. Pigs and poultry around the world consume more than double the seafood eaten by Japanese consumers and six times the amount consumed by the U.S. market.

Despite this large-scale extraction, few management plans have been created to guide the sustainable removal of these fish, and little is known about the role of forage fish in the marine ecosystem and how fishing impacts them. The most intensive commercial use of these fish is for farmed-animal feed, but there is also a growing demand for human fish oil supplements. In some areas of the world, especially developing countries, almost all of the small fish used as farm feed are, or once were, eaten by people. These include the Peruvian and European anchovy, capelin, Japanese pilchard, round sardinella, and European anchovy. “The use of forage fish for animal husbandry competes directly with human consumption in some areas of the world,” the authors write. Excessive removal of forage fish could also hurt populations of seabirds and marine mammals that rely upon them as food.

“We must find a better way to manage forage fisheries before we cause irreversible damage to the broader ocean environment which depends on them as a food source,” said Joshua Reichert, managing director of the Pew Environment Group. “Human beings are not the only, or necessarily, the most important consumer of these fish. Whatever people take out of the sea needs to be carefully calibrated to ensure that sufficient fish are left to sustain populations of other fish, seabirds and marine mammals which all play a major role in the healthy functioning of the world’s oceans.”

This fall the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University will launch the Lenfest Forage Fish Task Force, a team of preeminent scientists and policy experts from around the world that will address this escalating environmental dilemma. The Task Force will be chaired by Dr. Pikitch and funded by the Lenfest Ocean Program. Task force members will by 2010 develop scientific approaches to sustainably manage forage fisheries using “ecosystem-based fisheries management,” which emphasizes the interconnectedness of species and habitats and breaks from traditional species-by-species management. The Sea Around Us Project was established in 1999 at the University of British Columbia to study the impact of fishing on the world’s marine ecosystems. Project scientists have collected and organized data on the world’s fish catches dating back to 1950, mapping and comparing global catches over time. The massive database for forage fisheries includes information on calculated landings in the past six decades, the changes in species composition of fishmeal, and consumption by seabirds in different world regions. Visit www.seaaroundus.org/project.htm

The Institute for Ocean Conservation Science conducts scientific research about critical threats to oceans and

their inhabitants, providing the foundation for smarter conservation policy. The Institute is a major research program of Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences and was founded as the Pew Institute for Ocean Science in 2003. Visit us online at www.oceanconservationscience.org and www.somas.stonybrook.edu

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[World's Fish Supply Running Out, Researchers Warn](#)

January 21, 2009 by [admin](#)



An international group of ecologists and economists warned yesterday that the world will run out of seafood by 2048 if steep declines in marine species continue at current rates, based on a four-year study of catch data and the effects of fisheries collapses.

The paper, published in the journal *Science*, concludes that overfishing, pollution and other environmental factors are wiping out important species around the globe, hampering the ocean's ability to produce seafood, filter nutrients and resist the spread of disease.

"We really see the end of the line now," said lead author Boris Worm, a marine biologist at Canada's Dalhousie University. "It's within our lifetime. Our children will see a world without seafood if we don't change things."

The 14 researchers from Canada, Panama, Sweden, Britain and the United States spent four years analyzing fish populations, catch records and ocean ecosystems to reach their conclusion. They found that by 2003 — the last year for which data on global commercial fish catches are available — 29 percent of all fished species had collapsed, meaning they are now at least 90 percent below their historic maximum catch levels.

The rate of population collapses has accelerated in recent years. As of 1980, just 13.5 percent of fished species had collapsed, even though fishing vessels were pursuing 1,736 fewer species then. Today, the fishing industry harvests 7,784 species commercially.

"It's like hitting the gas pedal and holding it down at a constant level," Worm said in a telephone interview. "The rate accelerates over time."

Some American fishery management officials, industry representatives and academics questioned the team's dire predictions, however, saying countries such as the United States and New Zealand have taken steps in recent years to halt the depletion of their commercial fisheries.

“The projection is way too pessimistic, at least for the United States,” said Steven Murawski, chief scientist for the National Marine Fisheries Service, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “We’ve got the message. We will continue to reverse this trend.”

The National Fisheries Institute, a trade group representing seafood producers as well as suppliers, restaurants and grocery chains, said in a statement that most wild marine stocks remain sustainable.

The group’s spokeswoman, Stacey Viera, added that because the global demand for seafood has already outstripped the amount of wild fish available in the sea, her group’s members are meeting the need in part by relying on farmed fish. “To meet the gap between what wild capture can provide sustainably and the growing demand for seafood, aquaculture is filling that need,” she said.

But several scientists challenged that prediction and questioned why humanity should pay for a resource that the ocean had long provided for free. “It’s like turning on the air conditioning rather than opening the window,” said Stanford University marine sciences professor Stephen R. Palumbi, one of the paper’s authors.

Oregon State University marine biologist Jane Lubchenco said the study makes clear that fish stocks are in trouble, even though consumers appear to have a cornucopia of seafood choices.

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[Nearly half of all fish eaten today farmed, not caught](#)

January 16, 2009 by [admin](#)



Nearly half the fish consumed as food worldwide are raised on fish farms rather than caught in the wild, says a new report from FAO.

“The State of World Aquaculture 2006” was presented today to delegates from more than 50 countries attending the biennial meeting of the FAO Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (New Delhi, 4-8 September*). While in 1980 just 9 percent of the fish consumed by human beings came from aquaculture, today 43 percent

does, the report shows.

That's 45.5 million tonnes of farmed fish, worth US\$63 billion, eaten each year. (Currently, freshwater and marine capture fisheries produce 95 million tonnes annually, of which 60 million tonnes is destined for human consumption).

Not enough fish in the sea

Globally, consumer demand for fish continues to climb, especially in affluent, developed nations which in 2004 imported 33 million tonnes of fish worth over US\$61 billion — 81% of all fish imports that year, in value terms.

But levels of captures of fish in the wild have remained roughly stable since the mid-1980s, hovering around 90-93 million tonnes annually.

There is little chance of any significant increases in catches beyond these levels, FAO says.

The agency's most recent global assessment of wild marine fish stocks found that out of the nearly 600 species groups it monitors, 52 percent are fully exploited while 25 percent are either overexploited (17%), depleted (7%) or recovering from depletion (1%). Twenty percent are moderately exploited, with just three percent ranked as underexploited.

"Catches in the wild are still high, but they have levelled off, probably for good," explains Rohana Subasinghe of FAO's Fisheries Department and Secretary of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture.

This levelling off, coupled with a growing world population and increasing per capita demand for fish, spells trouble.

FAO's report estimates that an additional 40 million tonnes of aquatic food will be required by 2030 — just to maintain current levels of consumption.

The only option for meeting future demand for fish, Subasinghe argues, is by farming them

There's just one question.

Can aquaculture actually deliver?

The jury is still out, according to FAO's report.

"Aquaculture could cover the gap between supply and demand, but there are also many forces which could pull production in the opposite direction, making it difficult for the industry to grow substantially enough to meet demand in the decades to come," it notes.

Aquaculture has been experiencing a boom since the mid-1980s, sustaining a growth rate of around 8% per year. Today it continues to expand in almost all world regions, with the notable exception of sub-Saharan Africa.

But FAO is concerned that momentum could taper off if governments and development agencies don't adjust their policies to respond to emerging challenges that threaten to damper the sector's future growth.

One serious bottleneck, says FAO, is the lack of investment capital for producers in the developing world.

Another is a shortage of land and freshwater for use in aquaculture. Rising energy costs also pose a problem, and environmental impacts and questions of product safety continue to require attention.

Let them eat...?

The agency's report also points to doubts regarding future supplies of fishmeal and oil, used to feed carnivorous cultured species, such as salmon, grouper and sea bream.

Since 1985, world production of fishmeal and fish oil — manufactured using fish which are caught in large volumes but which are not consumed by humans — has stabilized at 6 to 7 million tonnes and one million tonnes, respectively.

While the vast bulk of fishmeal is used for livestock feed, chiefly by the poultry sector, aquaculture now accounts for 35 percent of the world's fishmeal consumption. So as aquaculture's fishmeal needs grow, competition with terrestrial livestock for a limited resource will intensify, with ramifications for both price and availability.

Key to resolving the dilemma will be continued progress in improving the efficiency of feed formulations — reducing the amount of fishmeal they contain — and coming up with adequate vegetable-based additives.

"We need to start planning now for handling these challenges, because aquaculture is crucial to the fight against global hunger," Ichiro Nomura, FAO Assistant Director-General for Fisheries, says. "It offers a source of food that is rich in protein, essential fatty acids and vitamins and minerals. And it offers a way to boost

development by providing jobs, improving people's incomes, and increasing returns on natural resource use. We must ensure that the sector continues to expand, sustainably, to provide more people with food and income, especially in areas like sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, where hunger and poverty prevail."

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[In China, Farming Fish in Toxic Waters](#)

January 11, 2009 by [admin](#)



FUQING, China — Here in southern China, beneath the looming mountains of Fujian Province, lie dozens of enormous ponds filled with murky brown water and teeming with eels, shrimp and tilapia, much of it destined for markets in Japan and the West.

Fuqing is one of the centers of a booming industry that over two decades has transformed this country into the biggest producer and exporter of seafood in the world, and the fastest-growing supplier to the United States.

But that growth is threatened by the two most glaring environmental weaknesses in China: acute water shortages and water supplies contaminated by sewage, industrial waste and agricultural runoff that includes pesticides. The fish farms, in turn, are discharging wastewater that further pollutes the water supply.

"Our waters here are filthy," said Ye Chao, an eel and shrimp farmer who has 20 giant ponds in western Fuqing. "There are simply too many aquaculture farms in this area. They're all discharging water here, fouling up other farms."

Farmers have coped with the toxic waters by mixing illegal veterinary drugs and pesticides into fish feed, which helps keep their stocks alive yet leaves poisonous and carcinogenic residues in seafood, posing health threats to consumers.

Environmental degradation, in other words, has become a food safety problem, and scientists say the long-term risks of consuming contaminated seafood could lead to higher rates of cancer and liver disease and other afflictions.

No one is more vulnerable to these health risks than the Chinese, because most of the seafood in China stays at home. But foreign importers are also worried. In recent years, the European Union and Japan have imposed temporary bans on Chinese seafood because of illegal drug residues. The United States blocked imports of several types of fish this year after inspectors detected traces of illegal drugs linked to cancer.

This week, officials from the United States and China signed an agreement in Beijing to improve oversight of Chinese fish farms as part of a larger deal on food and drug safety.

Yet regulators in both countries are struggling to keep contaminated seafood out of the market. China has shut down seafood companies accused of violating the law and blacklisted others, while United States regulators are concentrating on Chinese seafood for special inspections.

Fuqing (pronounced foo-CHING) is at the top of the list this year for refused shipments of seafood from China, with 43 rejections through November, according to records kept by the United States Food and Drug Administration. All of those rejections involved the use of illegal veterinary drugs.

By comparison, Thailand, also a major exporter of seafood to the United States, had only two refusals related to illegal veterinary drugs. China as a whole had 210 refusals for illegal drugs.

“For 50 years,” said Wang Wu, a professor at Shanghai Fisheries University, “we’ve blindly emphasized economic growth. The only pursuit has been G.D.P., and now we can see that the water turns dirty and the seafood gets dangerous. Every year, there are food safety and environmental pollution accidents.”

Environmental problems plaguing seafood would appear to be a bad omen for the industry. But with fish stocks in the oceans steadily declining and global demand for seafood soaring, farmed seafood, or aquaculture, is the future. And no country does more of it than China, which produced about 115 billion pounds of seafood last year.

China produces about 70 percent of the farmed fish in the world, harvested at thousands of giant factory-style farms that extend along the entire eastern seaboard of the country. Farmers mass-produce seafood just offshore, but mostly on land, and in lakes, ponds, rivers and reservoirs, or in huge rectangular fish ponds dug into the earth.

“They’ll be a major supplier not just to the U.S., but to the world,” said Richard Stavis, the chairman of Stavis Seafoods, an American company that imports Chinese catfish, tilapia and frog legs.

China began emerging as a seafood power in the 1990s as rapid economic growth became the top priority in the country. But environmental experts say that headlong pursuit of higher gross domestic product has devastated Chinese water quality and endangered the country’s food supply. In Guangdong Province in southern China, fish contaminated with toxic chemicals like DDT are already creating health problems.

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[One-third of world fish catch used for animal feed](#)

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - One-third of the world’s ocean fish catch is ground up for animal feed, a potential problem for marine ecosystems and a waste of a resource that could directly nourish humans, scientists said on Wednesday.

The fish being used to feed pigs, chickens and farm-raised fish are often thought of as bait, including anchovies, sardines, menhaden and other small- to medium-sized species, researchers wrote in a study to be published in November in the Annual Review of Environment and Resources.

These so-called forage fish account for 37 percent, or 31.5 million tons, of all fish taken from the world's oceans each year, the study said. Ninety percent of that catch is turned into fish meal or fish oil, most of which is used as agricultural and aquacultural feed.

Ellen Pikitch, executive director of the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science and a professor at Stony Brook University in New York, called these numbers "staggering."

"The reason I find that so alarming is that it's an enormous percentage of the world fish catch," Pikitch said by telephone. "And fish are fundamentally important to the health of the ocean overall."

Forage fish are near the base of the marine food web, nourishing larger fish, ocean-dwelling marine mammals and sea birds, especially puffins and gulls, the study said.

ECOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Unlike such dinner-plate fish as tuna, swordfish and cod, the extraction of forage fish is largely unregulated, Pikitch said. Excessive removal of these small fish from the ocean environment could hurt the species that feed on them.

Aside from the potential ecological consequences, the taking of these large numbers of forage fish interferes with food security for humans, she said.

On average, it takes three to five pounds (1.36 to 2.27 kg) of fishmeal to produce one pound (0.45 kg) of farm-raised fish, Pikitch said.

"If you're creating protein for humans to consume, does it make sense to take three to five pounds of perfectly good food and convert it into only one pound of food?" she said.

Most forage fish are high in omega 3 fatty acids associated with heart health, she said, adding that it makes sense for humans to consume these fish directly rather than to feed them to livestock and farmed fish.

But human consumption of these fish needs to be monitored, said Joshua Reichert of the Pew Environment Group.

"Whatever people take out of the sea needs to be carefully calibrated to ensure that sufficient fish are left to sustain populations of other fish, seabirds and marine mammals, which all play a major role in the healthy functioning of the world's oceans," Reichert said in a statement.

The study is the product of a nine-year partnership between the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and the Pew Charitable Trusts, funded by the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, which is transitioning to become the Institute for Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook.

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[Will Farmed Fish Feed the World?](#)

January 1, 2009 by [admin](#)



Nearly half of the seafood we eat today is farmed. And while aquaculture is often equated with pollution, habitat degradation, and health risks, this explosive growth in fish farming may in fact be the most hopeful trend in the world's increasingly troubled food system, according to a new report by Worldwatch Institute. In *Farming Fish for the Future*, Senior Researcher Brian Halweil illustrates how, if properly guided, fish farming can not only help feed an expanding global population, but also play a role in healing marine ecosystems battered by overfishing.

"In a world where fresh water and grain supplies are increasingly scarce, raising seafood like oysters, clams, catfish, and tilapia is many times more efficient than factory-farmed chicken or beef," says Halweil. "Farmed fish can be a critical way to add to the global diet to hedge against potential crop losses or shortages in the supply of meat."

"But not all fish farming is created equal," Halweil notes. Carnivorous species like salmon and shrimp, while increasingly popular, consume several times their weight in fish feed-derived from other, typically smaller, fish-as they provide in edible seafood. "It generally requires 20 kilograms of feed to produce just 1 kilogram of tuna," Halweil says. "So even as we depend more on farmed fish, a growing scarcity of fish feed may jeopardize future expansion of the industry."

Poorly run fish farms can generate coastal pollution in the form of excess feed and manure, and escaped fish and disease originating on farms can devastate wild fisheries. For example, a fish farm with 200,000 salmon releases nutrients and fecal matter roughly equivalent to the raw sewage generated by 20,000 to 60,000 people. Scotland's salmon aquaculture industry is estimated to produce the same amount of nitrogen waste as the untreated sewage of 3.2 million people-just over half the country's population.

Cramped facilities can also create ill health for fish, costing producers millions of dollars in disease prevention and foregone revenues. In recent years, shrimp farmers in China have lost \$120 million to bacterial fish diseases and \$420 million to shrimp diseases.

Fish farming has expanded to meet the soaring global demand for seafood. On average, each person on the planet is eating four times as much seafood as was consumed in 1950. The average per-capita consumption of farmed seafood has increased nearly 1,000 percent since 1970, in contrast to per-capita meat consumption, which grew just 60 percent.

In 2006, fish farmers raised nearly 70 million tons of seafood worth more than \$80 billion-nearly double the volume of a decade earlier. Experts predict that farmed seafood will grow an additional 70 percent by 2030.

How can fish farming be made more sustainable? Innovative industry practices are key, but a shift toward sustainable fish farming will also require a fundamental change in public attitudes. This includes a willingness to prioritize fish that are lower on the food chain, such as shellfish and tilapia. But can consumers today be

mobilized to shift the aquaculture industry in the same way they pressured tuna fleets to adopt more dolphin-friendly practices in the 1980s?

The need for more sustainable fish farming is critical, according to the report. Farmed seafood provides 42 percent of the world's seafood supply, and is on target to exceed half in the next decade, yet there are no widely accepted standards for what constitutes "good" fish farming. By comparison, the organic food industry has strong international and national standards, even though it constitutes just 3 to 5 percent of the world's food supply.

This points to a greater role for aquaculture certification and standards in the coming years, Halweil says. Efforts currently under way seek to model the effective labeling systems that exist in other areas of agriculture, such as for wild-caught fish, heritage breeds of livestock, and organic and local foods. "The last wild ingredient in our diet is no longer completely wild," says Halweil. "This doesn't have to be a permanent situation, since wild fish stocks can recover. But as more coastal ecosystems are transformed into sites for fish pens, cages, and cultured seaweeds, fish farmers and the food industry will need to make ecological restoration as much a goal as meeting the growing demand for seafood."

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[Food for Thought | Fish Food](#)

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Have you heard about omega-3s? You may have seen headlines in the New York Times or CNN touting their benefits. Maybe you have seen them highlighted on cereal boxes and other food products. What are they and why is it such a big deal?

The fat brain

Omega-3s are one type of Poly-Unsaturated Fatty Acid or PUFA that are incredibly important for your heart and brain. In fact, your brain is about 25% PUFA by weight and about 40% fat overall. Yes, the brain is a big fat organ! This is one reason why low-fat diet fads are not the best option.

Omega-3s are actually important for every cell in the body but they are especially high in brain cells. They help your brain cells signal to each other appropriately and keep things running smoothly.

So what kinds of foods have them? Actually, there are three main kinds of omega-3s. One that comes mostly from plants, like flaxseed and some nuts, and two others that come mostly from fish. They are all important for the body but the omega-3s found in fish appear to be most important for the brain.

Food for your mood

The interesting thing is that societies who eat more fish have lower rates of depression, suicide and violent behavior. Also, omega-3s have been found to be lower in blood samples from suicide victims, schizophrenics and bipolar patients.

These types of studies are called 'observational' because you can't say that low omega-3s caused these conditions. However, one study that took place in a British women's prison showed that giving inmates omega-3 supplements actually reduced violent behavior. Also, omega-3s have shown promise in small clinical trials treating depression and bipolar illness. Other studies in animals show that omega-3s affect the levels of

neuro-chemicals that control mood, like dopamine and serotonin.

This is not to say that if you don't get enough omega-3s that you will get mentally ill, but there appears to be a real link. Many factors contribute to mental illness, including, genetics, chronic stressful experiences, physical activity and yes, diet. Omega-3s look like they are one piece in the puzzle.

What about Mercury?

So should you just eat more fish? This brings up another problem. Too much fish can lead to problems from mercury and PCBs. In fact, pregnant women are advised not to eat fish at all. This is a big debate in the medical community because omega-3s are incredibly important for development of the fetus and the growing baby will 'steal' omega-3s from the mother if she doesn't get enough in her diet. Some researchers argue that this advice does more harm than good. Still, most doctors today don't offer their pregnant patients any other alternatives - they just say don't eat fish.

This is where fish oil supplements can come in. They are becoming very popular and offer a safe alternative - if you are careful. The thing to look for is 'molecular distillation' on the back of the bottle. This means that the manufacturer has tried to remove heavy metals and PCBs. Still, I would check with them to make sure they have some kind of quality control since the FDA does not regulate this claim.

Why now?

So why didn't we have all these problems centuries ago. It's not like all our ancestors took fish oil pills all the time. Well, there is another major factor that I haven't mentioned yet - omega-6s.

Omega-6s are another kind of PUFA that are also important in the brain. The balance between omega-6s and omega-3s in the diet is very important. They are like the yin and yang of fats. They compete with each other for many biological functions and keep each other in check.

For example, omega-6s help the immune system by turning on inflammatory processes necessary to fight infections. Omega-3s help to turn it off and keep inflammation low. They are both important but need to be kept in balance.

We think that the ideal ratio between omega-6s and omega-3s is about 1:1 and this is what we probably ate throughout most of our thousands of year history. However, today's western diet is closer to 10:1 or even as high as 30:1 in favor of omega-6s. We are getting too many omega-6s and not enough omega-3s to balance them out.

Why? Omega-6s are high in oils from corn, safflower, canola, peanuts and soy. These are found in high concentrations in many of the foods we eat, especially processed foods. It has really been since the industrial revolution that we started to consume large amounts of omega-6s and lower amounts of omega-3s.

Many researchers, including myself, believe that this is one factor in the rise of many diseases today. Since omega-6s tend to promote inflammatory responses, we are essentially eating a high inflammatory diet. Inflammation is a major suspect underlying many diseases of the brain and body - the big ones being heart disease and Alzheimer's disease.

So there it is. Omega-3s are important for many functions and they are a big deal because our dietary intake of omega-3s and omega-6s are out of whack. The best thing you can do is to stop eating many of the processed foods that contain high omega-6s and eat a little more fish. Personally, I take a high quality fish oil supplement daily and so do my wife and kids.

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[Fish Flee China](#)

December 26, 2008 by [admin](#)

China's trade problems worsened, as fish, which had been denied importation to the United States unless they could be certified as free of harmful chemicals, began to flee China.

They were seen flopping out of rearing ponds and tail-walking toward the nearest streams and rivers. The Yang-Se and other major waterways were reportedly overflowing with the departing fish.

When the official Chinese press agency learned of the sudden flight, a reporter was sent to interview them.

He boarded a raft and, heading downstream, held out his mike, and asked the escapees, "Why are you leaving China?"

"Do you know what they feed us?" one fish bubbled.

"A chemical feast!" another one gurgled.

"Really?" the reporter asked, being officially skeptical of any news that might incriminate the inarguably impeccable conduct of the Chinese regime.

"Where do you think we got this ultraviolet glow?" a third fleeing fish demanded.

"We need to wash those contaminants right out of our bodies," another one announced.

Then the finny creatures splashed off to wherever the rivers would lead them, hoping to find freedom from food-borne contaminants.

Meanwhile, Americans who had consumed excessive amounts of seafood from China continued to find consolation in the brilliant realization that they could now light their homes simply by entering them.

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[Proper Aquarium Fish Food](#)

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If you are thinking about setting up a tropical fish tank in your home so that you can enjoy the relaxing beauty of fish, it is a good idea to learn about the different factors that go into great aquariums. One of the essentials to any good tropical fish aquarium is the aquarium fish food that you choose, in order to help your fish thrive.

Making a choice about the right aquarium fish food is a basic and key element to ensuring that your fish stay happy and healthy. There isn't one fish food that is right for all kinds of fish, so you will need to invest some time and effort into becoming informed and educated about the best choices for the selection of fish you have in your tropical fish tank.

Different species of fish are naturally born to need different kinds of food. For this reason, there is a wide variety of aquarium fish food available. Pre-packaged and prepared fish foods come in different styles as well as the different elements of the food. There is flake food, pellet food, staked food, frozen dead food and also live food choices.

Some of the fish species have unique and specific food requirements when it comes to their dietary needs. Other types of fish have a great deal of variety in the type of aquarium fish food they can ingest and still be healthy and thrive. But, because of these differences, it is important to you, the fish keeper, to know what your specific fish varieties need so that you can supply the correct food.

It is also a good idea to complete some research about the kind of food a fish needs before deciding to buy it and adding it to your tropical fish tank community. Maintaining a collection of fish that have similar dietary needs will make it much easier for you to supply your fish with what they need. It also assures that one type of fish is not going to end up eating the wrong kind of food, when you are trying to feed a different tropical fish species in the same tank.

One of the things you will need to learn about your fish, is whether or not they are herbivores, carnivores or omnivores. If you have ended up with a mixture of different kinds of fish, each requiring a different type of aquarium fish food, then you will need to have the food for each type on hand.

Also, take the time to notice which part of the tank your fish gravitate toward when they are feeding. You will discover that some of them are top feeders that linger at or near the surface of the tank water, while others are clearly bottom feeders. This is also important to know in selecting the right tropical fish food. If you have bottom feeders, you need to be sure that you have selected fish food that will sink to the bottom of the tank rather quickly.

Also, there are some fish that will only eat during the day, while others will only eat in the dark. If you know that you have fish that only feed at night, be sure you turn out the lights in the room when they are being fed, allowing them to eat their aquarium fish food naturally.

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[Oscar Fish](#)

December 22, 2008 by [admin](#)

The Oscar fish belongs to the cichlid family and is usually found in areas of South America. The Oscar fish come in a wide variety of patterns and colors and are also known as Tiger, velvet or marble cichlid. The scientific name for these species is the *Astronotus ocellatus* and these grow upto 16" in length (40cm) and weigh over 3 pounds (1.5kg). The Oscar fish is also an intelligent species of fish and is very popular as aquarium fish as well. These are also very aggressive and you need to look after them with great care if you plan to have them in your aquarium.

Facts about Oscar Fish:

* The Oscar fish are an aggressive kind of species. These need an aquarium that is big in size. It is always advisable to have a minimum of 6 Oscar fish. These are sometimes known to attack each other for no apparent reason.

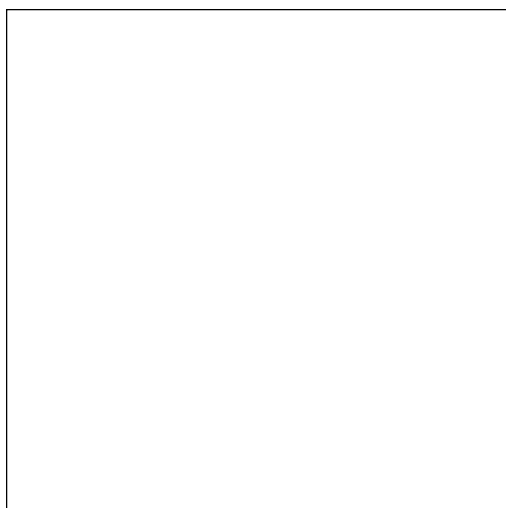
* The Oscar fish are also known to grow at a fast rate. Once, they grow, they require a lot of space. These need at least 30 gallons of space each. The optimum temperature should be around 26-28 degrees C.

- * The Oscar fish are known to change colors when they begin courting. These lay around 1000 eggs at a time and these are known to hatch within 2 days.
- * Be careful of the species of fish you may select to have in your tank along with the Oscar fish. Go in for large Neotropical Cichlids, which are of the same size. The Pink Oscars are the least aggressive so having them in your tank would require you to see that it also receives the appropriate amount of food to survive. Although, the Oscar fish are known to be very aggressive, their wild side may be seen when they tend to feel overcrowded in the aquarium or during the breeding period.
- * The tanks for the Oscar fish require frequent cleaning as these are known to dispose a huge amount of waste everyday. For this you need to have a strong filtration system for the aquarium tank.
- * The Oscar fish are known to apply their intelligence when it comes the way you decorate the aquarium. If they do not like the items you use in it, they are even known to pick these and push them around. Therefore, go in for a sandy bottom and big rocks.
- * Use a digital aquarium thermometer to keep a regular check on the temperature of the water. The Oscar fish are known to be easily adaptable but even then, keep a pH balance of about 7.2.
- * Always ensure you maintain the water change at regular intervals. Do this on a weekly basis. Siphon off a bit of the water and add some new water to it. Change at least 10 to 15 percent of the water to keep it healthy and safe for the Oscar fish.
- * Before you bring the Oscar fish home, you need to ensure that the aquarium is washed thoroughly and all the soap or any other residues have been completely rinsed off. Every item that is to be inserted into the aquarium needs to be rinsed completely.
- * The Oscar fish are a carnivorous lot. When it comes to these fish in the aquarium, it is safer to feed them processed or frozen food. Get some specific cichlid food items that would provide the Oscar fish with a balanced diet. These need a protein rich diet to maintain the good health.
- * Always ensure you do not overfeed the Oscar fish. Always remove any uneaten food from the aquarium as the Oscar fish, because of the tendency to produce waste, can add to the ammonia content in the water.
- * Avoid the use of bright lighting in the aquarium. The Oscar fish would prefer low intensity fluorescent bulbs.

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