



Group asks supermarkets to not sell threatened fish species

CANADA AM

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O'REGAN: Well, when it comes to the catch of the day Canadians have fallen hook, line and sinker. Supermarkets sell a majority of the catch, but the problem is some of the most popular seafood is vulnerable to extinction. A report by Greenpeace urges supermarkets to share responsibility for the collapse of fish and seafood stocks by simply ceasing to sell threatened species.

And now, joining me from Vancouver is Jennifer Jacquet. She is a researcher at UBC's fisheries centre.

Thanks for joining us.

JACQUET: Thank you for having me.

O'REGAN: First of all, Ms. Jacquet, what species are on our supermarket shelves that should not be, because they are endangered?

JACQUET: A few examples. Just to name one, for instance, is Atlantic farmed salmon. It's a very common species farmed out here. It's unsustainable because of its demand that it places on wild fish stocks. So, we have to feed salmon wild fish in order to farm them. So, that's one example.

There are a couple of species of tuna. There's Atlantic halibut. There's a whole host of species on the red list.

O'REGAN: And how many of them are fished in Canadian waters?

JACQUET: I'm not exactly sure how many are fished in Canadian waters. But there are a number of them that are fished in Canadian waters. More importantly, the demand in Canada for those species, it doesn't matter where they're fished, they're going to come into Canada whether or not they're fished in Canada or elsewhere. This is a global market.

And so, the demand here will affect fish stocks around the world.

O'REGAN: And fish do not carry passports.

JACQUET: No.

O'REGAN: What do you think of the idea of targeting supermarkets rather than consumers?

JACQUET: I think it's a great idea. If we want sustainable seafood to become something more than yuppie food we're going to have to effect change on a big scale. And one way to do that is through supermarkets. In Canada, two-thirds of seafood is sold through supermarkets. So, if you can affect the buying behaviour of these big entities rather than just household consumers you can really see an impact in the market.

O'REGAN: Yeah, and certainly we did it with tuna, I think 15 years ago, 20 years ago, with dolphin-friendly nets. I mean, those labels are still there when we buy tuna.

Even if supermarkets can and consumers -- I guess what's frustrating is that even if they stop buying endangered species other countries will buy them, other countries will fish them. How do we do something about that?

JACQUET: I think that really is the point, at the end of the day, that we have to ask ourselves: why is this unsustainable fish for sale to begin with? And, ultimately, I think that's a failure of governments and therefore the people. And it really is going to have to come down to international governance and collective decision-making of behalf of the world if we want to see fish stocks -- wild fish stocks -- last into the future for our children and their children's children.

O'REGAN: Okay, Ms. Jacquet, thank you very much for your time. We appreciate it.

JACQUET: Thank you.

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