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Fish food bad for the environment

By AMANDA OYE

Feeding animal's fishmeal creates unnecessary problems for the world.

Giving them a different meal would benefit the world's fisheries and ease climate change problems, according a team of researchers who wrote the Oryx, an article published online by The International Journal of Conservation.

Currently, 36 per cent of the fish caught in the world are made into fishmeal and oil, half of which goes into feeding farmed-fish, according to Jennifer Jacquet, the lead author of the study and a post-doctoral fellow at UBC's Fisheries Centre.

"Instead we could just eat the fish directly and have more fish at the end of the day."

Alternatively, farmed-fish can be fed insect meals, bug meals, and soy meals, according to Jacquet.

The other half of the fishmeal and oil produced goes to feeding pigs and chickens, mostly in the U.S. and Japan.

These animals "don't even need protein necessarily... so we would like to see an outright ban" in feeding them fishmeal, said Jacquet.

The main message of the study is that people should engage more as citizens than as consumers, according to Jacquet.

To tell consumers to change their behaviour "is a bit trite," she said.

"We need to connect seafood to climate change."

Our seafood travels very far, so alternative food sources would help minimize the carbon footprint it creates she said.