

Domestic farm animals are devouring the world's fish stocks: B.C. study

BY LARRY PYNN, VANCOUVER SUN NOVEMBER 17, 2009



A man sorts through a stack of fresh pomfret in Karachi's fish harbour on Aug. 9, 2009. A UBC study, published this week in *Oryx: the International Journal of Conservation*, finds that 36 per cent of the world's total fisheries catch each year is currently ground up into fishmeal and oil to feed domestic animals.

Photograph by: Akhtar Soomro, Reuters

VANCOUVER — Consumer campaigns that promote sustainable seafood fail to address the fact the world's fish resources are being gobbled up by chickens, pigs and other farm animals, a study involving the University of B.C. concludes.

The study, published this week in *Oryx: the International Journal of Conservation*, finds that 36 per cent of the world's total fisheries catch each year is currently ground up into fish meal and oil to feed domestic animals and urges the discovery of alternative feed sources.

"Meanwhile, 25 per cent of infants in Peru, which produces half of the world's fish meal using anchovies, are malnourished," said UBC fisheries researcher and co-author Daniel Pauly.

Lead author Jennifer Jacquet, a post-doctoral fellow at UBC's Fisheries Centre, added: "Global fisheries consume 13 billion gallons of fuel each year just to catch and land fish. That's more gas than 22 million cars would use."

In the *Oryx* article, nine fisheries and conservation researchers — including four from UBC — reviewed the effectiveness of past conservation campaigns.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium has distributed more than one million seafood wallet cards advising

consumers on sustainable seafood, but has found no overall change in the market and that fishing pressures have not decreased for targeted species.

The Oryx study suggests campaigns targeting large supermarket chains would have more effect, noting more than 60 per cent of seafood in Canada and half the seafood in the U.S. is sold through supermarkets.

The authors also suggest establishing international standards for labelling sustainable seafood and eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies.

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