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Campaigns don't save fish

VANCOUVER - CONSUMER campaigns to protect threatened fish species have failed, researchers warned on Tuesday in a report underscoring the need for alternative ways to save threatened marine species.

The report suggested that government and consumers make big wholesalers and retailers stop selling threatened fish species; that farmers and agricultural feed makers stop using fishmeal for cheap protein; that national subsidies for fishing industries be axed; and that international standards be set for 'sustainable' seafood labels'.

More than a third of fish caught worldwide is used to feed factory-farmed animals, they said. 'Currently, 30 million tonnes of fish (36 per cent of world fisheries catch) are ground up each year into fishmeal and oil, mostly to feed farmed fish, chicken and pigs.'

'Decreasing the amount of fish used for the production of animal feed should be a top priority of the sustainable-seafood movement,' said the report. 'Pigs and chickens alone consume six and two times the amount of seafood as US and Japanese consumers.'

'For pigs and chickens, we don't need to be feeding them fishmeal,' co-author Jennifer Jacquet told AFP. 'We should feed them what they were meant to eat.'

The food industry uses fishmeal as a 'cheap protein source' to achieve fast growth rates in food animals, she said, 'but with the oceans as stressed as they are, that's not going to work for a long term plan'.-- AFP