

Daniel Mulcahy - Overfishing – What is the future of wild caught fisheries?

What is the future for the fisheries? They are caught between the fight for sustainability and economic growth.

Fisheries are bad for the ocean's ecosystem. They take too many fish from overfishing and they catch other species as well. Fisheries have sometimes come close to making an animal extinct. We must start to limit fisheries before the ecosystem starts to change drastically. We must find alternative ways to still bring in fish. One of the best ways to do this is aquaculture. Aquaculture is the breeding or raising of aquatic animals or plants. This is a way that will solve overfishing problems. We will be able to breed fish so there still will be stock. No unnecessary animals will die in the process and the oceans fish populations will start to go up.

The salmon farms in Tasmania are a great example of aquaculture. The salmon are providing an alternative source of sea food which helps the natural fish because people aren't overfishing the ocean to get more food. The more fish in the ocean to reproduce means more eggs and larvae replenishing the natural fish stocks. The loss of one species of fish can affect the whole food web in an area of the ocean (Hjul, 2015). This is why it's important that we try to find alternative ways to avoid this from happening. Aquaculture is one of these alternatives. The fish is the same quality as the fish caught in the wild. The people who feed the fish have created food for the salmon mimicking a wild one's diet, making it the same as if it was in the wild. If we try that with other fish it could work out well. Another benefit from aquaculture is that they grow large quantities of fish in a small area (pens) decreasing the impact on the greater environment, where wild fish live.

An outstanding benefit of changing to Aquaculture is that it will help the economy. If we limit the overfishing and focus on creating new businesses in aquaculture, then it would assist in creating new jobs which the people who worked for the fishing industry could take up (The Tassal Group, n.d). All businesses use products, if there were more fish farms, the food the nets and the boats, would all have to come from somewhere. They would buy them from other businesses supporting theirs not just their own. Two Tasmanian salmon farms have together a value of around 1 billion\$ dollars. That proves that aquaculture is a successful business (The Tassal Group, n.d). Aquaculture can increase national economy as well as local economy. The Tasmanian aquaculture industry gets a lot of demands from other countries such as China (Hjul, 2015).

We must limit fishing industries as when they go trawling with nets they don't just catch the target fish, they catch everything else that is in the nets path. Some of the time the fish kill themselves trying to escape and it can drastically reduce the population of that fish in that area affecting the food web. Shark fins are in great demand for soup, research has estimated that around 100 million sharks are killed each year (World Wildlife Fund, n.d). Many sharks have become endangered because of it. With Aquaculture there is no trawling because all the stock is bred. The nets are in shallow protected waters so no other animals can get caught in them. Ghost nets are a huge problem for the ocean. Ghost nets are nets that have been abandoned. Nets break, then they get thrown into the ocean by the people who own them (Hancock, 2019). Nets can entangle marine life causing injuries and stopping movement. That itself can be an extreme danger but nets also break down into tiny bits of plastic which the fish can eat. That can cause internal injuries and can expose them to toxic chemicals. According to science around 46% of the great pacific garbage patch is nets (World Wildlife Fund, n.d).

Fisheries are wrecking the oceans ecosystem making it dangerous for us in the future. If we limit the industries and switch to something more sustainable while still providing fish for the economy type fish could start to repopulate the ocean. If we lose an animal in the ocean could drastically affect the food chain possibly causing other species to drop in numbers or rise. We need to go for other options, so we save more fish.

References

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Assistance

Parents – Proof reading and ideas

Mrs Baume-Tarrant (Science Teacher) – discussed ideas and referencing advice.