



Skimp on the shrimp

Not enough wild shrimp to meet global demand

Wild shrimp are generally caught by bottom trawling, dragging nets along the sea bottom. Landings of wild shrimp fisheries are between 2 and 3 million tonnes a year. But with virtually all of the world's major stocks of wild shrimp heavily exploited or overexploited, there simply aren't enough shrimp to meet the giant and growing consumer demand in Europe and in the USA.

Shrimp farming supplies 26% of the total shrimp market

Shrimp is farmed in some 50 countries; 99% of farmed prawns come from developing countries. Around 26% of total shrimp production is coming from aquaculture. Two species, Pacific White Shrimp and Black Tiger Prawn, account for more than 85% of the world's farmed shrimp production. Much of the shrimp sold in restaurants and supermarkets today is cultivated in large factory-style farms carved out of the coastal landscape. From 940'000 tonnes in 1999, the shrimp farms raised their production to nearly 1'300'000 tonnes in 2001, and production is expected to double in the next decade.

Farmed Shrimp Production 1997-01 Top 20 countries (Source: FAO Fishstat+)					
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
China	102.923	143.086	170.830	217.994	304.182
Thailand	227.560	252.731	275.544	309.863	280.000
Indonesia	167.445	118.111	140.946	138.023	149.168
India	66.868	82.634	78.570	96.715	102.930
Viet Nam	49.298	54.853	57.433	69.433	67.500
Ecuador	119.439	129.600	107.700	50.110	60.000
Bangladesh	56.480	66.080	81.068	58.183	60.000
Mexico	17.422	23.749	29.120	33.480	48.014
Philippines	41.610	37.853	39.281	41.802	42.390
Brazil	3.613	7.254	16.054	25.388	30.430
Malaysia	9.512	9.835	12.187	15.894	26.990
Colombia	6.907	7.466	9.227	11.390	12.000
Venezuela	4.632	5.200	6.000	8.500	10.512
Taiwan	5.752	5.382	5.836	7.193	9.129
Honduras	9.000	8.203	6.417	8.153	8.000
Iran	524	869	1.800	4.050	7.607
Nicaragua	3.449	4.784	4.198	5.411	5.721
Myanmar	2.123	2.392	4.936	4.964	5.473
Madagascar	2.477	2.492	3.486	4.800	5.399
Sri Lanka	3.640	6.520	3.820	6.970	5.120
WORLD TOTAL	945.916	1.017.117	1.094.345	1.143.072	1.270.875

The environmental cost of shrimp farming

The increasing levels of shrimp farming are unsustainable because of the devastation caused to tropical coastal regions in South-East Asia and Latin America. The ecological damage is caused by the clear-cutting of mangroves to build ponds and the use of high inputs of antibiotics, pesticides and industrial fishfeeds. Western demand is the driven force behind this destruction. As this demand is increasing year after year, huge expanses of tropical coastlines are threatened, together with a lot of coastal communities.

It is estimated that 25% of mangroves have been lost in the last 20 years. We can reasonably estimate that more than 1/3 of total mangrove loss has been due to shrimp farming, which appears to be clearly the greatest single threat to mangroves worldwide.

In Indonesia -3rd farmed shrimp producer in the world- 296'000 ha were destroyed by the shrimp industry from 1960 to 1990. In Ecuador -6th producer- almost 50% of the mangroves have been lost, most of it attributed to shrimp farming. In the Philippines -9th producer- half of the mangroves surface lost from 1951 to 1998 were turned into shrimp farms.

Greenpeace is working for solutions

Greenpeace is working with local activists in developing countries and at the United Nations to prevent further damage by shrimp farming. Greenpeace ships worked with local communities in Central America to campaign against the environmental destruction caused by the spread of shrimp farms in the region. These shrimps are a luxury our environment cannot afford.

**For media inquiries, please contact the Greenpeace International media hotline:
+ 31 629 00 1141**

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