

Personal Development Resources

Understanding what the most sustainable is, salmon, prawns or some other fish or other protein food?

Quick Guide



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In this quick guide we aim to provide an overview of the 7 Key Themes to ESDGC relating to the above topic



1. Choices & Decisions

The choice is between a range of options, not just either/or. Each choice would have different implications. More detailed information might be needed, such as: where is the seafood from, how has it been grown, processed and transported, what are the other options, such as other fish, or vegetarian food options?



2. Identity and Culture

What is the impact on the culture of origin, on other cultures and on our own?

On the west coast of Scotland small businesses have made a living fishing sustainably for centuries

Tiger prawns imported from Indonesia or India have caused damage to coastal communities by damaging the local fishing resources, and depleting coastal ecosystems. In Indonesia people are campaigning against selling 95,000 km of coastline supporting millions of people for centuries to private businesses for development into prawn fisheries. For some it is too late, the mangrove has already been destroyed, and with it the whole ecosystem.



3. Wealth and Poverty

Does this product have a beneficial or detrimental effect on the distribution of wealth locally and globally?

Some prawns are caught in Scotland and transported by boat to Thailand to be shelled by workers earning 25p per hour, then returned by boat for consumption in the UK. As a result factory workers in Scotland have been laid off.

Communities in India and Indonesia lose livelihoods and are thrown into poverty when coastline is developed into prawn farms. Wild salmon is more sustainable than farmed salmon but it is expensive for people on low incomes. Try mackerel for a much cheaper option.

Alternative protein sources such as tofu, nuts and seeds or beans and lentils are much cheaper.



4. The Natural Environment

What is the impact on the natural environment locally and globally?

Wild salmon are more sustainable than farmed salmon, better for the environment and better for health.

When coastal mangroves and ecosystems are cleared to make way for prawn farming it causes great damage to local wildlife, and loss of important ecosystems.



5. Health

How does this product affect health locally and globally, in all the stages of production and use?

Seafood is an important component of the diet in many cultures globally, being an important source of protein and omega oils, vitamins and minerals.

Scientists have found evidence of dioxins and PCB contamination in the fishmeal fed to farmed salmon, raising food safety concerns. Wild salmon is safer and tastier. Fresh mackerel is also very high in omega 3 oils. Alternative protein sources are available such as tofu, nuts and seeds or beans and lentils. These are also good sources of omega oils, vitamins and minerals.



6. Climate Change

How does the production and use of this product affect the climate? What is its carbon footprint?

Farmed seafood, both salmon and prawns, require many inputs, such as feed and medicines. Wild seafood has a lower footprint, so long as it is not transported great distances for processing.



7. Consumption & Waste

Is this product made from finite or renewable resources? How can it be recycled at the end of its useful life?

In theory fish are a renewable resource, but it is estimated that stocks of many species are so low that they cannot recover. Some species are more at risk than others, with cod being particularly at risk. Wild salmon are more sustainable than farmed salmon.

Because salmon are carnivorous, requiring fish meal in their diet, each pound of farmed salmon requires between two and five pounds of wild fish. This means a net loss of marine resources.

Conclusion

On balance at the moment our expert would:

Avoid all factory farmed seafood, use small amounts of wild prawns or wild salmon as a luxury, but otherwise eat locally caught mackerel, and explore vegetarian options.