



In brief

As a consumer, you have considerable power and responsibility. With your help, unsustainable methods of prawn production can be eradicated.

- ❖ Read more about the problems of prawn production at www.ejfoundation.org/shrimp
- ❖ Cut down on eating prawn – or cut it out altogether unless you can be assured that it comes from sustainable sources.
- ❖ Tell your supermarket / restaurant / fishmonger that you will only buy prawns produced in an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable way. Contact EJF if you would like more information and actively help this campaign.
- ❖ Send a letter to your supermarket and demand ethical shrimp. www.legacy.ejfoundation.org/page197.html
- ❖ Join EJF and support our work directly. Call **0207 239 3310** or email info@ejfoundation.org or visit www.ejfoundation.org/get-involved
- ❖ Spread the word.

Fisheries, consumption and sustainability

Globally, people eat more fish than any other type of animal protein and fishing and aquaculture support the livelihoods of 660 to 820 million people. Yet, currently, 85% of the world's fish stocks are over-fished or fully exploited and much seafood production is unsustainable. It is vital that our ocean resources are better managed if we are to continue to rely on fisheries as a key food source and prevent the decimation of our shared marine life.

In the 1970s, fish farming was hailed as a 'Blue Revolution' – a way to reduce pressure on wild fish stocks. Yet, it has had its own, equally devastating impacts. Farmed seafood is often fed on wild-caught fish – reducing fish stocks rather than helping to conserve them. Fish and prawn farms can also be very polluting and replace coastal habitats that can serve as 'nurseries' for wild fish stocks.

Please think twice before consuming seafood – find out where and how it was produced and the impacts of its production before you buy.



1 Amwell Street, London, EC1R 1UL, UK
tel: +44 (0) 207 239 3310
fax: +44 (0) 207 713 6501
info@ejfoundation.org
www.ejfoundation.org

the environmental justice foundation Consumer Guide to Prawns

Can you spot the difference?



This prawn was produced in an ethically and ecologically sound manner.



Producing this prawn entailed environmental devastation and human rights abuses.

No?

Currently, consumers have no real way of knowing.

Now make a difference.

Demand only sustainable, ethically-traded prawns.



www.ejfoundation.org

Why a consumer guide for prawns and shrimp?

Prawn (or shrimp*) production has been linked to a number of environmental problems and human rights abuses. This guide aims to clarify the issues and help you make the right choices when buying prawns.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone who takes their influence as a consumer seriously. Your choices can make a difference. You can help prevent accidental capture of sea turtles in prawn fisheries, the use of child labour in prawn farms, or the abuse of people who have their land seized by prawn farm owners.

We know it is hard to make informed decisions as a consumer – faced with the expanding choice and multitude of labels currently on supermarket shelves. This guide was produced to help you. We cannot always give easy answers - but we will set out the facts clearly, providing you with the information to make your own choice. By asking the right questions and making informed choices at the shops or restaurants where you buy prawns, you can help promote environmentally sustainable prawn production.

* Some people use 'prawn' and 'shrimp' interchangeably – EJF makes no distinction between the two.



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TV chef **Ken Hom** supports EJF's prawn campaign

Ken says, ***"The environment has been degraded and human rights have been abused to bring us this luxury food product. Join me and the Environmental Justice Foundation and demand only sustainable, ethically produced prawns"***.

To watch Ken's campaign message visit:
www.ejfoundation.org/shrimp/ken-homs-recipe-for-disaster

The Environmental Justice Foundation

The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF) is campaigning to end the environmental and human rights abuses associated with prawn production. Please voice your concerns at your local supermarket, restaurant or fishmonger and give support to this growing international campaign.

What should you ask your supermarket / restaurant / fishmonger?

Prawn trawlers in the tropics can accidentally catch up to 20kg of other species for every 1kg of prawns. Make sure your prawns don't contribute to this destruction.



© NOAA

Currently there is no adequate labelling system for consumers to identify prawns produced in a sustainable manner. This makes it difficult to buy prawns responsibly. But, there are questions you can ask your local supermarket, restaurant or fishmonger to find out more about their prawn supplies:

- ❖ Which countries are prawns sourced from, and are these prawns fished or farmed?
- ❖ Can they ensure that prawns sold come from well-managed sources and are not linked to environmental degradation or social problems? For example, do they have certain standards or 'codes of conduct' that they apply to the management of prawn farms and fisheries, and can they provide information on who monitors the implementation of these standards?
- ❖ If the prawns are fished, how do they ensure that the accidental capture of other marine life is reduced or eradicated?
- ❖ Do they sell 'organically farmed' prawns? Organic production has fewer environmental impacts (however social issues are only partially addressed).
- ❖ Do they sell prawns that are 'fairly traded' and ethically produced, helping coastal communities to benefit from the trade in this luxury food?

If you are unsatisfied with the answers your retailer provides, avoid buying prawns – and tell them why.

A PULL OUT AND KEEP GUIDE TO BUYING PRAWNS

Every time you are faced with purchasing prawns, consider how much you know about their production. Can you be sure it didn't cause environmental degradation or lead to human rights abuses? Use this diagram in your supermarket, restaurant or fishmonger.

Fished

Appearance:
large



Tropical prawn trawling

Production can entail:

- High levels of bycatch
- Threats to endangered species
- Damage to seabed and marine life
- Negative social impacts/human rights abuses

Appearance:
generally small



Cold water prawn trawling

Production entails:

- Lower levels of bycatch
- Damage to seabed and marine life
- No negative social impacts

Appearance:
generally large



Well-managed prawn trap fisheries

Production entails:

- Lower levels of bycatch
- Reduced damage to seabed
- No negative social impacts

Farmed

Appearance:
large



Prawn farming

Production can entail:

- Pollution
- Loss of mangrove forests
- Depletion of wild fish
- Negative social impacts/human rights abuses

Appearance:
large



Certified organic prawn farming

This could be a way forward. However, despite the development of several certification schemes, currently there is not one that EJF believes adequately addresses both environmental and social criteria.

Some prawn products will have production information on the label. If they don't – ask why!

Don't know? Don't buy!



GET INFORMED BEFORE YOU BUY!

Demand proof that your prawns come from sustainable and socially equitable sources



Where do the prawns you buy come from?

Warmwater prawns

Large tropical prawns (e.g. 'tiger' or 'king' prawns) are commonly found in curries and oriental ready-made meals. They can be fished or farmed. The vast majority of farmed prawns come from developing countries, including several countries such as Bangladesh, Honduras, India, Thailand and Ecuador where human rights abuses and environmental damage have been linked to prawn production. Some prawns are farmed according to organic standards, reducing the environmental impacts on the local environment by avoiding use of antibiotics and pesticides. Large tropical prawns can also be caught using trawlers, though this often has devastating impacts on marine life.



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Coldwater prawns

The generally smaller prawns (commonly found in sandwiches and prawn cocktails) come largely from trawl fisheries in the cold Atlantic waters of northern Europe and North America. These fisheries have been able to reduce 'bycatch' levels to a great extent, though some scientists are still concerned about the ecological impacts of dragging heavy nets over the seabed.

Why should you be concerned about prawn production?

Prawn trawling is:

- ❖ Wasteful – Prawn trawlers in the tropics can accidentally catch up to 20kg of other species for every 1kg of prawns. This unwanted 'by-catch' is usually dumped overboard dead or dying.
- ❖ At a time when our oceans are under immense pressures, prawn trawlers are responsible for about 30% of the world's discarded by-catch.
- ❖ Destructive – 150,000 marine turtles are drowned by tropical prawn trawlers each year.
- ❖ Heavy trawls are often dragged over seabeds and can cause severe damage to marine habitats including coral reefs.

© WPSI / Operation Kachhapa / WildAid



Turtle killed by prawn trawler in India

Prawn farming is linked to:

- ❖ Destruction of coastal habitats, deforestation and pollution of farmland and water supplies. 30% of mangrove forest loss is attributed to prawn farms.
- ❖ Human rights abuses. Violence, intimidation, child labour, forced and bonded labour, loss of traditional livelihoods, and murders in at least 11 countries have all been directly linked to prawn farming.
- ❖ Antibiotic and pesticide use – including several banned in Europe because of health concerns.
- ❖ Depletion of wild fish stocks – due to habitat loss, accidental capture of other marine species in the collection of young prawns to stock farms and the use of wild fish as prawn-feed.

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