



Alarming drop in fish numbers

Dear Editor, A new study has found that excessive fishing has caused numbers of Australian fish, like bream and snapper, to decline by a third. The 10-year study published in Aquatic Conservation, looked at nearly 200 species at 544 sites, and found the main cause for decline was overfishing and climate change. The research confirmed that there is an "urgent need" to declare more marine reserves. "Despite public desire for marine protected areas ... [they] cover less than 2 per cent of global marine waters."

It should come as no surprise that the fishing industry is the biggest killer of animals on the planet. Whether they are plentiful or not, all fish feel pain and suffer horribly on the journey from sea to supermarket as they are hauled up in commercial fishing nets that have been dragged along the ocean floor, tearing up whatever stands in their way. These sensitive animals are crushed to death, suffocated or thrown overboard to succumb to their injuries in the water. Altogether, more than one trillion fish and other sea animals die at the hands of humans each year. That's about 143 sea animals for every human on Earth.

Deep-sea trawling is also responsible for widespread damage to coral reefs and underwater mountains, and as a result, the ecosystems that depend on these habitats are crumbling. This reckless destruction of the ocean is both cruel and unsustainable. The good news is that delicious cruelty-free options – such as fish-free fish fingers, faux-fish cakes and mock prawns – are delicious, affordable and easy to find. PETA's free vegan starter kit has great tips and recipes to help you make the transition to a diet free of fish and other animals. Desmond Bellamy Special Projects Coordinator PETA Australia PO Box 2352 Byron Bay NSW 2481 0411 577416 DesmondB@PETA.org.au

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