

Eating Shrimp

Why we care

Shrimp is the most popular seafood in the United States. But about 90 percent of shrimp sold here comes from Southeast Asian or Central American farms where antibiotics are often used. In a 2020 research study, lab tests showed that most of the shrimp samples contained residues of antibiotics that are illegal in the US.

To make room for these farms, coastal mangroves—the salt-tolerant trees and shrubs with stilt-like roots that form dense thickets along tidal shores—are destroyed. About 40% of mangrove forests that filtered water, prevented flooding, sequestered carbon, and provided food and shelter to indigenous people, were lost between 1970 and 2000.

Unfortunately, ocean trawling for wild shrimp is also a damaging practice. The massive nets used in trawling pick up “bycatch”—seven pounds of non-targeted fish for each pound of shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico. Many of these unintentionally caught creatures are dead or dying when they are thrown back into the water.

Simple, positive steps

- In Monterey Bay Aquarium’s [Seafood Watch](#), see ratings of fisheries that are well managed and caught or farmed in ways that cause little harm to habitats or other wildlife.
- Favor small pink shrimp from Oregon rated as “Certified” by Seafood Watch.
- Participate in a [Community Supported Fishery](#): participants pay a “share” which goes directly to the fishermen. Generally, these fishermen are bringing fish from Alaska to Portland.
- When you eat at a restaurant, ask, “Do you serve sustainable seafood?” The business may not know, but this a good way to create demand.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org.