

Campaign update

Fish Farming



Stop sourcing fish oil from West Africa – international organisations and academics call on the Norwegian government to regulate its salmon farming industry

We sent an open letter to the Norwegian government calling on it to ban the salmon farming industry from sourcing fish oil from West Africa.

July 3, 2024

Amelia Cookson

In the wake of the publication of our [Blue Empire](#) report, this week we sent an open letter to the Norwegian government, calling on it to ban the salmon farming industry from sourcing fish oil from West Africa in light of the threat this practice poses to regional food security and livelihoods.

The 39 signatories comprise organisations and academic experts from around the world. Several of the African groups such as the Collectif Taxawou Cayar, WADAF, RAMPPO and CFFA represent the region's small-scale fishing sector and communities which are suffering from the impact of overfishing, in part driven by the production of fishmeal and fish oil for the global aquaculture industry. Norwegian and international NGOs including Naturvernforbundet (Friends of the Earth Norway), the Environmental Protection Association of Norway (NMF) and Oceana have also joined the call to action.

Humble beginnings...

From the humble beginnings in the 1970s, Norway is now the world's biggest farmed

From the humble beginnings in the 1970s, Norway is now the world's biggest farmed salmon producer, with Norwegian companies occupying eleven out of the top 20 slots in the list of global producers of farmed salmon. The industry is dominated by a handful of powerful multinational corporations, including MOWI, the world's largest salmon farming company, which had a turnover of nearly €5 billion in 2022, and supplies supermarkets all across Europe.

However, what some in Norway view as a corporate success story, has come at the expense of communities and fish populations in the Global South.

Norway's 'Blue Empire'

Our 'Blue Empire' report published earlier this year, shows that, as the world's largest salmon producer, Norway's salmon farming industry has an enormous 'feed footprint', driving the extraction of around 2 million tonnes of wild-caught fish each year to produce fish oil, which is fed to Norwegian farmed salmon. A significant share of this fish comes from food insecure regions, such as West Africa where food insecurity has hit a 10 year high. Our research calculates that the production of West African fish oil for the Norwegian aquaculture industry is depriving up to 4 million people in the region of fish.

With this in mind, we argue that what Norway sees as a 'blue opportunity' is in fact a 'blue empire'. The movement of wild fish from the Global South to feed salmon in the Global North which is then sold at a premium is creating a new type of food colonialism, further entrenching global inequity.

Adding to the absurdity, the Norwegian government's uncritical embrace of industrial aquaculture stands in stark contrast to Norwegian development policy. In 2022, Norway's Strategy promoting food security in development policy stated that their overall objective was to "fight hunger and increase global food security". In the foreword to the strategy, Anne Beathe Tvinneim, Minister of International Development emphasized that while in sub-Saharan Africa, 70–80% of the population works in agriculture and fishing, "Paradoxically, these very farmers and fishers represent the majority of chronically hungry families." Whilst the government is setting out admirable goals to fight hunger globally and highlighting the macro trends driving food insecurity in Africa, they remain silent on Norway's role, with the extractive business model of its salmon farming industry creating the very conditions they say they want to improve.



'The Fishmeal Industry Is A Serious Threat To Food Security And The Future Of Fisheries In West Africa. This Industry Plunders Our Marine Resources To Feed Intensive Aquaculture In Asia And Europe, When Local Populations Need It For Their Own Food. It Is Time That "The Fish Of The Poor Stopped Feeding The Fish Of The Rich". Our Oceans And Our People Deserve Better!'

Dr. Aliou Ba, Senior Ocean Campaign Manager, Greenpeace Africa

What we are calling for

In light of these findings, we are calling on Norwegian policy makers to:

1. Ensure that Norwegian companies' activities and feed sourcing practices do not contradict its own development policy by mandating an immediate ban on the sourcing of fish oil from food insecure regions including Northwest Africa;
1. Stop further growth in Norway's salmon farming sector so that it remains within planetary boundaries;
1. Mandate genuine transparency throughout aquaculture supply chains, including full disclosure of suppliers – from source fisheries upwards

You can read our letter here:

**OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
NORWAY**

Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister

Andreas Bjelland Eriksen, Minister of Climate and Environment

Geir Pollestad, Minister of Agriculture and Food

Marianne Sivertsen Næss, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Policy

Cecilie Myrseth, Minister of Trade and Industry

Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anne Beathe Tvinning, Minister of International Development

2nd July 2024

Dear Prime Minister, dear Ministers,

We are a group of NGOs, charities and academics dedicated to building a more sustainable and equitable food system. We are writing to urge the Norwegian government to take rapid action to regulate Norway's salmon farming industry in light of new findings highlighting its huge and growing appetite for wild-caught fish from food-insecure countries in the Global South.¹

Norway is the world's biggest producer of farmed salmon and consequently has an enormous feed footprint. Farmed salmon feed is made up of various ingredients such as soy, vegetable oils (including palm oil), wheat, fish meal and fish oil (FMFO), which is produced using fish caught in the wild. Research published by Feedback, alongside SRFC, WADAF, Greenpeace Africa, RAMPAO and Spire shows that in 2020, nearly 2 million tonnes of wild fish – equivalent to a staggering 2.5% of global marine fisheries catch – were required to produce the fish oil supplied to the Norwegian farmed salmon industry. 75% of these were fish that are otherwise widely eaten, such as anchovy, sardine, sprat and herring, with the remainder made up of fish critical to the marine ecosystem, such as sand eels.

What some in Norway view as a corporate success story has come at the expense of communities and fish populations in the Global South. A significant share of the fish oil Norwegian farmed salmon companies use is imported from Northwest Africa, depriving up to 4 million people in the region of fish to meet their annual nutritional needs. This is fuelling a modern-day food imperialism which in addition to entrenching global inequity and food

insecurity is extremely inefficient: Norway's annual output of farmed salmon is one-quarter (27%) lower than the volume of wild fish required to produce the fish oil used in Norwegian farmed salmon feed.

¹ *Blue Empire: How the Norwegian salmon industry extracts nutrition and undermines livelihoods in West Africa* (2024) <https://feedbackglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Feedback-BlueEmpire-Jan24.pdf>

In 2022, the Norwegian government published *Norway's strategy for promoting food security in development policy*.² In the foreword to the strategy, Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development, noted that, "An overall objective of the Government's development policy is to fight hunger and increase global food security." Despite the good intentions of Norway's development policy, the expansion of its salmon farming industry is in direct contradiction to these objectives. The inefficient and wasteful use of wild fish, in part to supply feed and aquaculture companies in the Global North, is driving the loss of livelihoods and exacerbating malnutrition, disproportionately impacting women and children, in nations including Gambia, Senegal and Mauritania.

With Norway's salmon farming industry planning to triple production on current levels by 2050, we urge Norwegian decision-makers to:

- Ensure that Norwegian companies' activities and feed sourcing practices do not run counter to its own development policy by mandating an immediate ban on the sourcing of fish oil from food insecure regions including Northwest Africa;
- Stop further growth in Norway's salmon farming sector so that it remains within planetary boundaries;
- Mandate genuine transparency throughout corporate supply chains, including full disclosure of suppliers – from source fisheries upwards.

We look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Carina Millstone, Executive Director, Feedback Global

Frank Mechielsen, Executive Director, Feedback EU

Dr Oulie Keita, Executive Director of Greenpeace Africa

Mor Mbengue, Coordinator of the Collectif Taxawou Cayar

Marie Suzanna Traoré, Executive Secretary, RAMPAO

Moussa Mbengue, Executive Secretary, WADAF

Noble Kwame Asare, Senior Lecturer, Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Cape Coast

Beatrice Gorez, Coordinator, Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements

Gytis Blaževičius, Head of Young Friends of the Earth Norway, (Natur og Ungdom)

Siri Martinsen, Director of the board, NOAH - for dyrs rettigheter

² <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/Food-security-strategy/id2948780/>

Randi Storhaug, Vice Chair, Naturvernforbundet

Erik Hagen, Director, The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara

Elise Åsnes, Leader, Spire

Jeppe Kolding, Professor, Universitetet i Bergen

Ragnhild Overå, Professor, Universitetet i Bergen

Ruben Oddekalv, Leader, The Environmental Protection Association of Norway

Jens Olav Flekke, Chair, Reddvillaksen (NASF Norway)

Rune Jensen, CEO, SalmonCamera

Cecilia del Castillo Moro, Fisheries policy officer, Spain, Ecologistas en Acción

Fay Orfanidou, Executive Director, Katheti

Roc Sandford, Director, Ocean Rebellion

Eva Douzinas, President, Rauch Foundation

Eoin Dubsky, Senior Campaigns Manager, Ekō

Alex Cornelissen, CEO, Sea Shepherd Global

Sylvia Valentin, Chair, Western Sahara Resource Watch

Andrianna Natsoulas, Campaign Director, Don't Cage Our Oceans

Kelly Roebuck, Sustainable Seafood Campaigner, Living Ocean Society

Dr. Cornelia E Nauen, President, Mundus maris asbl

Pascale Moehrle, Executive Director, Oceana in Europe

Catalina Lopez, Director of the Aquatic Animal Alliance, Aquatic Life Institute

Mary Ann P. Bimbao, Executive Director, Quantitative Aquatics, Inc.

Marta Cavallé, Executive Secretary, Low Impact Fishers of Europe

Gonçalo Carvalho, Executive Coordinator, Sciaena

Rachel Mulrenan, Scotland Director, WildFish

Steve Trent, CEO/ Founder, Environmental Justice Foundation

Tobias Troll, Marine Policy Director, Seas At Risk

Marteen Bavinck, Chair of the Board, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

(ICSF)

Catalina Cendoya, Director of the GSFR, Global Salmon Farming Resistance

Camilla Toulmin, Senior Fellow, Africa-Europe Foundation



Download the letter [here](#).

Part of our work



Fish Farming

Fish farming threatens our ocean and food security

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Our Fish. Notre Poisson

Tackling industrial fishmeal and fish oil production in West Africa

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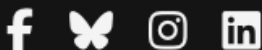


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