



**Friends of
the Earth**

Concerns and Talking Points: Industrial Ocean Fish Farming

Industrial ocean fish farming is a form of aquaculture that involves the mass breeding, rearing and harvesting of finfish in net pens, pods, and cages, allowing for unrestricted exchange between the farm and the ocean ecosystem. These underwater factory farms have numerous risks to public health, the environment and the economy, including:

- **Catastrophic fish spills;**

These spills often involve farmed, non-native fish – such as Cooke Aquaculture’s release of more than 160,000 Atlantic salmon into Puget Sound and the Pacific– and in extremely large numbers. Escaped fish can spread disease, risk interbreeding and genetic degradation, and compete with native, wild salmon for limited resources and habitat.

- **Release of chemicals, agricultural drugs, and excess nutrients;**

Industrial ocean fish farms use chemical compounds, including copper, on their structures and nets to prevent corrosion and fouling. They often use agricultural drugs, such as antibiotics, on the farmed fish. Finally, the farms freely discharge excess feed and fish waste, such as nitrogen and phosphorous. All of these pollutants leech into the ocean, causing harm to the ocean water and floor, as well as marine life.

- **Corporate control** of seafood production;

Industrial ocean fish farms are owned and operated by mega-corporations, like Cooke Aquaculture. Corporate-driven goals such as expansion and profits come first, at the expense of sustainability, safety and product quality.

- **Threats of harm to native wildlife;**

Industrial ocean fish farms attract wildlife to congregate around fish cages, which then get entangled in nets, harassed by acoustic deterrents, and hunted. In March 2017, an endangered monk seal died in the nets of an industrial seafood farm in Hawaii.

These harms are just the tip of the iceberg. Industrial ocean fish farms are leading to the **overfishing of forage species** by relying on fish oil and fish meal to feed their farmed fish populations, and are increasingly using unhealthy additives in fish feed, such as **GMOs**. These underwater factory farms are also **putting wild fishing communities out of business**, creating unnecessary **competition for marine waters**, and imposing **hazardous conditions for workers**.

The time is now to stand up to these underwater factory farms!

Keep them out of our oceans!