

Gotcha!

Over 10 million tonnes of marine animals die each year as bycatch. They die painfully in nets and on lines that are dragged through the world's oceans.

Agonizing death of many animals

By-catch refers to all incidentally caught marine organisms that are not target species. A large proportion of them are seriously injured or thrown back overboard dead. It is estimated that bycatch accounts for up to 40%¹ of the total global catch and includes over 10 million tonnes of marine creatures.² Including fishes³, sea turtles, sea birds, whales, seals, dolphins, sharks, rays and corals.

Non-selective fishing methods

This huge by-catch occurs because industrial fishing is not selective. Among the methods with the highest by-catch rates are trawls and pelagic longlines.⁴ Bottom trawls are used to catch mainly crustaceans such as shrimps and flatfish. The nets are dragged across the seabed, devouring everything that lives near the seabed. In fact, shrimp fishing has the highest by-catch rates of up to 80% of the total catch. Pelagic longlines are several kilometres long and equipped with numerous bait hooks. Target species for this method are mainly tuna and swordfish. By-catch rates are also high, especially of seabirds, sharks and sea turtles.

Hundreds of thousands of marine animals affected

It is estimated that 50% of all shark and ray species are threatened by overfishing (targeted or as by-catch), habitat destruction, pollution and climate change.⁵ As industrial fleets fish more and more ocean areas, there is virtually no refuge left for sharks and rays and the risk of dying as by-catch is enormous.⁶ In addition, an estimated 1 million seabirds⁷, 250,000 sea turtles⁸, 300,000 whales and dolphins per year perish as bycatch in fishing gear. A large number of young fish also end up as by-catch and are lost to reproduction of the species.⁹

When you eat a tuna steak, remember that sharks, turtles and seabirds have died for it. We therefore recommend that you keep your hands off marine species that have been fished with non-selective fishing methods.



¹ Davies et al. 2009

² Pauly & Zeller 2016

³ Too small individuals of the target species, fish species for which no fishing permit is available, commercially uninteresting fish species or non-target species of the respective fishery.

⁴ Chuenpagdee et al. 2003, FAO 2019, Clay et al. 2019

⁵ Dulvy et al. 2014

⁶ Queiroz et al. 2019

⁷ <https://www.birdlife.org/africa/news/saving-seabirds-and-turtles-dying-fishing-activities-west-africa>

⁸ <https://oliveridleyproject.org/blog/effects-of-bycatch-from-fishing>

⁹ https://wwf.panda.org/our_work/oceans/problems/bycatch222/bycatch_victims/

Let's give the seas a break.

Sustainably. For marine life. For us. For our descendants.

www.kyma-sea.org/break

