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Aquaculture over-optimism? (<http://www.cmscoms.com/?p=32798>)

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A new study (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2022.984354/full>) in *Frontiers in Marine Science*, led by researchers at the University of British Columbia, presents evidence suggesting that global aquaculture growth rates peaked at 14.1 per cent in 1996 and have been in continuous decline since then.

China, which leads the top 10 aquaculture countries with the highest farmed species production, experienced an order of magnitude drop in the growth rate of its aquaculture, which went from about 45 per cent over the five years before the growth rate peaked for the country in 1954 to 2.6 per cent between 2014 and 2018.

Countries like Myanmar, Chile, Norway and Thailand also exhibited downward trends, with some of them even showing negative growth rates.



(http://www.cmscoms.com/?attachment_id=32801)

The notion that fish farms could supply fish for the world seems unrealistic

"The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development have projected an average annual aquaculture production of 101 million tonnes by 2030, which means that they expect an annual growth rate of approximately 2 per cent to the 2018 production level. They have also projected an average annual demand for food fish of 173 million tonnes by 2030," Rashid Sumaila, lead author of the study and professor at the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries and the School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, noted. (Photo: Quang Nguyen Vinh)

"These numbers suggest that for aquaculture to supply most or all of the total global fish demand – as has been stated in some over-optimistic studies and media reports – the supply from fish farms would have to grow by at least three times the average projected annual growth rate by the FAO, World Bank and the OECD. Meanwhile, all we see is declines," he said.

The study concludes that it is not viable to rely on aquaculture to solve a myriad of global food insecurity problems, with one of the most serious consequences of aquaculture over-optimism being that it could strongly reduce the incentive to re-build and conserve wild fisheries except wild forage fish used in feeds.

"The world needs to guard against this happening to avoid social and economic consequences for many coastal communities," Pauly said.

For further information read the press release from the University of British Columbia here (<https://www.searounds.org/expecting-aquaculture-feed-world-may-unrealistic-ubc-led-study-shows/>) and the full journal paper in *Frontiers in Marine Science* here (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2022.984354/full>).

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