



ALLIANCE™

[.https://www.globalseafood.org](https://www.globalseafood.org)

Responsibility

Seafood loss and waste rate in the United States is half of previous estimates

19 December 2023

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Study identifies production losses associated with imported food as a significant contributor

A new study reveals that the aquatic food loss and waste (FLW) rate in the United States is roughly half than previously estimated.

The United States, as the largest importer of aquatic food globally, plays a pivotal role in shaping the sustainability of the world's food system. The study, published in *Nature Food* (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-023-00881-z>), and conducted using a combination of primary and secondary data along with life cycle methodology, showed surprising results regarding the extent of FLW in the U.S. seafood supply chain.

“There are significant differences in FLW among species, production technology, origin and stage of supply chain,” wrote the researchers. “We estimate total aquatic FLW was 22.7 percent, which is 43 to 55 percent lower than earlier estimates reported in the literature, illustrating the importance of applying a disaggregated approach.”



A new study puts total aquatic food loss and waste at 22.7 percent – up to 55 percent lower than earlier estimates reported in the scientific literature. Photo by [Mitchell Luo](https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-of-a-red-fish-in-the-wet-market-5673669/) (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-of-a-red-fish-in-the-wet-market-5673669/>).

The study identifies production losses associated with imported food as a significant contributor, amounting to over one-quarter of the total FLW. To effectively address these losses, the researchers emphasize the need for multinational efforts, calling for interventions along the entire supply chain. This includes innovative solutions, government incentives, policy changes, infrastructure improvements and a focus on equity.



(<https://link.chtbl.com/aquapod>).

“Businesses throughout the supply chain may draw insights relevant to improving their own operations and tracking their discards and quality losses more thoroughly,” wrote the researchers. “Third-party auditors could add FLW targets to certification schemes. The data can be shared to improve aquatic food estimates within existing databases such as through **ReFED** (<https://refed.org/food-waste/the->

challenge/), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Loss-Adjusted Food Availability data series and the FAO. The findings also provide a benchmark to track progress within the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and the methodology can be applied to other regions or food sectors."



Eat the whole fish: A discussion of culture, economics and food waste solutions

The Big Fish Series explored the logistical and cultural challenges in front of greater whole-fish consumption and how much seafood is being wasted.



Global Seafood Alliance

The implications of the study are far-reaching, providing valuable insights for policymakers, industry and advocates of responsible seafood. It challenges earlier assumptions but also helps identify targeted solutions for reducing aquatic FLW.

According to the study, key priorities include tackling waste in-home consumption and aquatic food production, especially in aquaculture. For instance, strategies like improving water quality, disease prevention, improved hatchery genetics and governance can reduce mortality in aquaculture. For capture fisheries, priorities include harvesting methods to reduce unwanted catch and improved cold chain and handling of fish. Additionally, the study recommends improved data collection and incorporation of waste metrics into sustainability monitoring and consumer labeling to reduce aquatic FLW.

[Read the full study here \(https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-023-00881-z\)](https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-023-00881-z).

[@GSA_Advocate \(https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate\)](https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate).

Author



RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE

editor@globalseafood.org (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>)

Copyright © 2023 Global Seafood Alliance

All rights reserved.