

# Bluefin Tuna Farms Come Under Fire

The demand for bluefin tuna around the world is high -- especially in Japan, where tuna is a favorite food at sushi restaurants. Tuna is healthful too. It is packed with protein and other nutrients that are part of a healthful diet. But all the demand for tasty and healthful tuna is causing problems.



Did you know that much of the world's bluefin tuna is raised on "tuna farms"? The world's increased appetite for tuna meat has led to the growth of farms where bluefin are raised. About a dozen farms are located in countries along the Mediterranean Sea. Other farms can be found in Australia and Mexico. Each year, those farms produce much of the world's bluefin tuna. The tuna raised on those farms is shipped to Japan, the United States, and other countries.

Some environmental experts say that bluefin tuna farms should be shut down. Tuna farms are not really "farms," they say, because the tuna there are not hatched from eggs. Instead, young bluefin are caught in the Mediterranean and sent to the farms to be fattened up. Once grown, they are shipped off to restaurants and stores.

Tuna farming is causing harm to the ocean food chain too, environmentalists add. Tuna on farms are raised on a diet of small fish. They are fed wild mackerel by the truckload. But taking mackerel and other small fish from the sea in such large quantities takes away food that other ocean species need to survive. That's why environmentalists hope to stop new tuna farms from opening. In addition, they want to set up "No Take Zones" in the Mediterranean where tuna fishing would be against the law.

## NEWS WORD BOX

sushi	appetite
protein	mackerel
efficient	quantities

Tuna farmers say raising bluefin on farms is efficient and helps protect wild tuna from harm. But environmentalists say people should stop eating bluefin.

In Japan, scientists at one university have set up a different kind of tuna farm. Tuna on their farm are hatched from eggs instead of being caught in the ocean. Someday, the scientists hope to raise bluefin that are not fed a diet of small fish from the sea. They are working to make a new kind of food for tuna that is made from vegetable protein.

## DIGGING INTO THE NEWS

Do you know the origins of your favorite foods?  
Research the true origin of some of those foods.

## NOTE:

Most canned tuna fish is not made from bluefin tuna. It is made from other -- more plentiful -- breeds of tuna. Read the label to learn what kind of tuna is in the can.