

wild salmon stocks further at risk through the spread of disease and diminishing ocean water quality.

In the past years, the deterioration of the environment, reduced fish stocks and most recently area licensing as well as a low return on fish harvests have pushed fleet fishers to sell boats and lose employment. Entire coastal communities are affected as people lose their livelihood and communities loose control of their resources.

There has been a growing resistance to government policies and the corporate agenda on the West Coast. Fishers have protested policies and fishery issues by forming a blockade in Prince Rupert and containing an Alaskan ferry boat for days. Fishers have protested in Victoria and Vancouver, and they have occupied the offices of government ministers.

Similar realities are affecting whole coastlines and hundreds of communities in Asia and the Pacific. Aquaculture in the form of shrimp farming is actively promoted by corporations and government as a quick return on investment to small local farmers. Harvested prawns and shrimps from Ecuador, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are exported to a huge and apparently insatiable market in the north. Where prawns have, until recently been considered a luxury in North American diets, the current production of shrimps through aquaculture have ensured a steady supply, and a shift in diets. Shrimp and prawns are no longer a scarce commodity for North American palates. Traditional fishing methods in exporting nations have been replaced with the harvesting of shrimp eggs for aquaculture.

The promotion of the "Blue Revolution" by corporations and governments has seen remarkable changes in a twenty-year period. Rice farmers and local fishers, encouraged to increase their profits, have cleared their coastal lands of mangrove forests, converted the forest area and rice paddies to large ponds where shrimp eggs are hatched and nurtured. The shrimp require costly processed feed and antibiotics to prevent the outbreak of disease. Diseased prawns are harvested quickly and marketed before they die.

The destruction of mangrove forests, a critical component of the environment for shoreline protection has had devastating effects as unbuffered cyclones and storms hit coastal communities causing deadly flooding. Once the natural barrier has been cleared, erosion rates escalate as delicate shorelines are exposed to strong tidal action. As mangrove forests are destroyed, so too are valuable fish habitat. Mangrove swamps house diverse fish species in all stages of their life cycles. Local fish stocks decline.

Environmental degradation is killing fish, and traditional coastal community food sources are disappearing. In addition, shrimp ponds are unsustainable: rice paddies are converted to fish ponds, pesticides, antibiotics, and shrimp excrement pollute the ponds making them unsuitable for high density shrimp farming up to ten years. Degradation is also being caused by the salination of the land as sea water needs to be brought into the shrimp ponds. The polluted ponds are abandoned and new ponds are established further along the coast. Communities left in the wake have lost traditional sources of food, and livelihoods. The land is made unusable for any other productive purpose as well. The result is devastating.