

Topic : Declining of Sea Life

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Introduction

Recent years we have witnessed a decline of sea life right around the globe. Various factors such as expansion of human resources are responsible for the reduction of sea life. In other cases sea life has become victim of exploitation due to the greed of some individuals. In most cases sea life are being destroyed without justification. The result of human activities is that species go extinct and ecosystems are degraded and polluted.

Discussion:

The Qurān explains the importance of wildlife on earth: : **“There is not an animal (that lives) on earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you”** (Quran 6:38).

The Prophet (SAW) taught us the consequences of killing the animal kingdom without justification. Any killing of animals without justification in Islam is not allowed even if the victim is a very small animal or bird. The Prophet (SAW) said: **"No human being kills a sparrow or [something] larger, without right, except that Allah will ask him about it (hold him responsible!) on the Day of Judgment" It was asked: O Prophet of Allah! What is its right? He said: " Its right is that you slaughter it and eat it, you do not kill it and throw it away."**(An- Nasai). In another narration the Prophet (SAW) said: **" If you kill a sparrow senselessly, it will hasten to Allah on the Day of Judgment saying : O Rabb! so and so killed me for play and not for use!"** .(An- Nasai) These traditions clearly indicate that the person hunting for anything except food will face dire consequences in the Hereafter.

Although a killing of birds are motioned in the traditions this rule applies to all other animals that are killed without justification. Killing of animals unnecessarily can lead to extinction of certain species and in the long run can impact on the ecological systems.

The Ulama (learned scholars gave their view on unjustified killing of animals). Ibn Taymiyyah's ruling on hunting is as follows: *Hunting out of necessity is permitted; if it is for fun and playing, it is detested (not desirable) and if it causes injustice to people, by destroying their fields and property, it is prohibited.*

Imam al-Sharbini in the book *Mughni al-Muhtaj* (5/527) explained the obligation to protect rare

animals and the prohibition on causing them to extinct: *“As for animals, which possess souls, one is obliged to protect them from attempts to annihilate them, so long as there are no concerns that the efforts will harm them. Therefore, if one sees an animal owner attempting to kill the animal under a forbidden circumstance, then that person [who sees the attempt] is obliged to protect [the animal].* In his book and (6/37) he explains: *It is prohibited to slay animals for non-consumption purposes”*

Imam Zakaria in the book *Asna al-Matalib* (1/555) explains the haram status of animal hunting – which may lead to destruction and extinction – without an acceptable purpose: *“The Fuqaha (experts of Islamic jurisprudence) have decided that it is haram (unlawful) to hunt animals whose meats are halal (permissible), when the hunt is not aimed at slaughtering the animals for consumption. Such activities will lead to extinction,”*

Imam Ahmad al-Khattabi in his book of *Ma’alim al-Sunan* (4/289), explains the prohibition on causing animal extinctions entirely: *“It is understood that the extinction of a people and the annihilation of a generation of a creature, leaving out not a single one of them to live, are very much detested. There is no single creature of Allah SWT created with no purposes and uses. Hence, there is no justification for killing animals entirely (causing their extinction).*

Al-Jahiz, Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr al-Fukaymi al-Basri , stated in His book *al-Hayawan/the Animals* that the human beings are not entitled to mistreat animals, and says the following. *“You are not entitled to cut an organ or to persecute and hurt all kinds of animals because you are not the one who created it and cannot replace it.*

Dr. Ahmad Yasin Al-Qaralah says in his work entitled “Huquq al-Hayawan wa Damanatuha fi al-Fiqh al-Islami”: *“The Islamic law rules that an animal has the right to preserved . Therefore, it is forbidden to kill or slaughter them, if the action may cause the species to be extinct or disappear.”*

Examples of how life in the oceans are destroyed by human actions:

Two-thirds of the world's fish stocks are either fished at their limit or over fished. The UN food and agriculture organisation (FAO) has estimated that 70 percent of the fish population is fully used, overused or in crisis. Since 1950, with the onset of industrialized fisheries, we have rapidly reduced the resource base to less than 10 percent not just in some areas, not just for some stocks, but for entire communities of these large fish species from the tropics to the poles.

Fish stocks mostly targeted these days range from giant blue marlin to mighty bluefin tuna, and from tropical groupers to Antarctic cod, The impact we have had on ocean ecosystems has been vastly underestimated. These are the big predators of the sea, and the species we most value. Their depletion not only threatens the future of these fish and the fishers that depend on them, it could also bring about a complete re-organization of ocean ecosystems, with unknown global consequences.

Many fish stocks are in precipitous decline. Bycatch is a major contributor to fishing mortality and a key factor in observed decline of fish stocks. Bycatch in fishing terms is understood to be a fish or any other marine species that is caught unintentionally while fishermen try to catch certain species for consumption purposes. Bycatch can also be undersized or juvenile individuals of the targeted species. Globally using of fishing nets are responsible for the killing of non –targeted marine species.

Fishing boats are venturing into farther reaches of the ocean, guided by high-tech devices. The sophisticated equipment makes it possible to scope out fish and cast nets with greater accuracy, even

in areas that in the past were difficult to trawl. As a result, many deep-water species are being fished so heavily they could soon reach the point of no return.

Devices designed or perfected for precise military operations include sonar technology, satellite navigation systems, and depth sensors, are now routine equipment for many commercial fishing fleets. These devices combined with detailed maps of the ocean floor give boats access to deep-sea areas where fish gather and spawn.

In many cases aerial surveillance is part of the picture. Some fishing boats in the Atlantic use spotter planes while the high-value tuna industry in the Pacific uses helicopters and other tracking equipment to seek out schools of prized fish and scoop them up in huge quantities.

Citing the findings of a recent survey of North Atlantic fisheries, the scientists warned that stocks of highly favored fish—such as cod, tuna, haddock, flounder, and swordfish—could disappear from plates within a decade if these species continue to be fished at present levels. The fish dwells deep in the ocean and travels long distances to spawn above seamounts in the Southern Hemisphere. Protected in the deep, it can grow to 150 years old. Due of this long lifespan, it matures and reproduces relatively late in life.

In the 1980s, fishing fleets discovered the fish's spawning grounds off New Zealand and southern Australia. Catches were often remarkable—as many as 60 tons in only 20 minutes of trawling. In the face of such intensive harvesting, the fish cannot breed fast enough to ensure that the species will be available for future generations.

Live-fish carrier vessels, called viviers, can carry up to 30 metric tons of fish from reefs throughout much of the Indo-Pacific Ocean. The giant vessels often deploy smaller boats, as many as 20 per trip, to reach inner reef sites, and the fish are brought back to the mother ship for transport to major demand centers in Southeast Asia.

Pelagic long lines are the most widespread fishing gear. Long lines catch a wide range of species in a consistent way over vast areas. Long lining is a fishing method that uses hooks instead of nets. These lines, which can be 130 kilometers (80 miles) long, are set for open ocean species like swordfish and tuna.

But fish aren't the only marine creatures they catch. Seabirds, particularly albatrosses and petrels, regularly grab the baited hooks. Many albatrosses are dragged to their deaths—more than 100,000 each year.

Over the last century billions of tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases were emitted into earth's atmosphere due to industrial and other human activities. About half of this anthropogenic, or man-made, CO₂ has been absorbed over time by the oceans. The introduction of massive amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the seas is altering water chemistry and affecting the life cycles of many marine organisms, particularly those at the lower end of the food chain. When carbon dioxide (CO₂) dissolves in this ocean, carbonic acid is formed. This leads to higher acidity, mainly near the surface, which has been proven to inhibit shell growth in marine animals and is suspected as a cause of reproductive disorders in some fish.

Up until now, scientists have tied the current collapse of the world's coastal ecosystems almost entirely to recent human impacts such as pollution and increased nutrient runoff. Oil spills from oil tankers wreak havoc on coastal plants and marine animals. Litter dumped on beaches can cause havoc on marine life especially plastic debris which takes up to 500 years to decompose. Ocean pollutants are also released into the environment far upstream from coastlines. Nitrogen-rich fertilizers applied by farmers inland, end up in local streams, rivers, and groundwater and are eventually deposited in estuaries, bays, and deltas.

Conclusion

Scientists have claimed that many species sea life are on brink of extinction many ecosystems are on the verge of collapse. Humanity should try to live a life of sustainable development, otherwise there will be nothing left for future generations to benefit from our blue planet.

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