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FEATURE - OVERFISHING

Overfishing Why all the fuss about fish?

only 2-3% of the world's big sea fish are left. The state of the oceans is, if anything, worse than the state of the rainforest. And far, far less is being done about it. We are, quite simply, taking out too many fish, for food and for fertilizer, using destructive and wasteful fishing methods. And we have been for over a hundred years. And it's accelerating. The percentage of fish species registered as threatened by the Red List rose from 4% in 2000 to 37% in 2008. And that's only the species they've managed

It's not just the loss of bio-diversity, nor even the thought that your grandchildren might never get to taste anchovies or tuna if we carry on this way. A combination of straightforward pollution, our selective removal of key species from ecosystems, and global warming, is creating vast dead-zones of water where nothing can live, except toxic algae blooms and the occasional jellyfish (the cockroach of the sea as far as indestructibility goes). As we relv on the oceans for more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere, if we get too many dead zones, we're in even more trouble than if we were to lose

get so rare we that it's no longer commerically viable to fish them, we'll just wait a few years and they'll bounce back". Often, they don't. If you take a species out of a system, the system has perforce to adjust. New species (usually simpler organisms from lower down the foodchain), move in, and make it exponentially harder for an over-fished species to recover. It is feared that cod, once so plentiful at Cape Cod that they "stayed the ships' with their swarming bodies, have been supplanted in their Atlantic ecosystem since the 1992 crash by jellyfish and are likely never to be able to recover

anyone can legally fish. And while there are many individual fisherman and monster companies who are happy to exploit the oceans to the last sprat if there's money in it for them, there is no organisation with any real power to protect stocks on an international level. The Japanese and Norwegians have made a joke of the whaleprotection laws; in 2006 Russia and Canada opposed a global petition by 1000 scientists to end high seas bottom trawling; French fisherman this

year are staging port blockades to have their fishing quotas actually increased, and EU politicians are ignoring their own scientists' frantic advice to reduce quotas all round and stop fishing altogether on some species. Did you know some of your taxes are going to fund the building of new fishing boats? All this is in addition to the pirate fishing vessels from all nations, including our own.

The French fisherman, quite reasonably, argue that if they don't take the fish, someone else will. And it's hard enough for small businesses to compete with the monster fishing fleets. On the bigger vessels, tons of fish are rounded up by FADs, frozen into blocks at sea, transported to developing countries for cheap filleting, re-frozen and sent round the world again to be processed further.

And if one country tightens up its quotas and makes it harder to land over-quota fish, well, hey, the catch is already on a boat - they can just mosey

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CINEMA	to Thu	
	18th	
Ultimate Picture Palace (245288)		
STAR TREK [12A] <i>E</i> The youthful origins of Kirk, Spock and Co.	Mon - Thu: 8.30pm	
IN THE LOOP [15] <i>K</i> Political satire from Armando Iannucci.	Mon - Thu: 6.00pm	
Phoenix Picture House (08)	70 758 3218)	
LOOKING FOR ERIC [15] 🚿 Mon - Tue, T A lost postman needs a hero. Ken Loach & Eric Cantona.	hu: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.00pm Wed: 4.00, 6.30, 9.00pm	
LAST CHANCE HARVEY [12A] 🚿 Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, romcom.	Mon - Thu: 2.00, 8.45pm	
ANYTHING FOR HER [15] 🖉 Mon, Compelling French thriller.	Wed & Thu: 4.15, 6.45pm Tue: 4.15pm	
FUTURE SHORTS This month: Please Say Something	Tue: 6.30pm	
THE BIG SCREAM: LOOKING FOR ERIC		

Vue Cinema (08712 240 240)

TERMINATOR: SALVATION [12A] 🖄 Mon: 12.30, 2.20, 3.20, 5.10, 6.10, 8.00, 9.00pm Tue: 12.30, 2.20, 3.20, 5.10, 6.10, 8.00 (18+only), 9.00pm Wed: 12.30, 2.20, 3.20, 5.10, 6.10, 8.00, 9.00, 10.50pm Thu: 12.30, 2.20, 3.20, 5.10, 6.10, 8.00, 9.00, 11.50pm

nother installment of destruction and time trave Mon & Tue: 1.00, 3.30, 6.00, 8.30pm Wed & Thu: 1.00, 3.30, 6.00, 8.30, 11.10pm THE HANGOVER [15]

A bachelor party goes horribly wrong. LOOKING FOR ERIC [15] A Mon - Tue: 12.00, 2.30, 5.05, 7.45pm Wed & Thu: 12.00, 2.30, 5.05, 7.45, 10.30pm A postman needs a hero. Ken Loach and Eric Cantona. LOOKING FOR ERIC [15] 🖄

LAST CHANCE HARVEY [12A] 🖉 Mon - Thu: 1.10, 3.45, 6.20, 8.45pm edv. Subtitled Tue 6.2

LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT [18] C Mon - Wed: 1.30, 4.00, 6.40, 9.15pm, Thu: 1.30, 4.00, 6.40, 9.15, 11.55pm slick remake of Wes Craven's highly unpleasant debut fea

ANYTHING FOR HER [15] 🚿 Wed & Thu: 11.00pm

DRAG ME TO HELL [15] Mon, Wed: 4.10, 9.30pm; Tue: Christine is the unwitting recipient of a sup	: 9.30pm, Thu: 4.10, 9.30pm, 12.00a ernatural curse.	
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2 [P More exhibits come alive.	G] Mon - Thu: 12.45, 3.10, 5.45, 8.15p	
ANGELS & DEMONS [15] 🚿 Sequel to the Da Vinci Code.	Mon & Tue: 1.15, 4.20, 7.30p Wed & Thu: 1.15, 4.20, 7.30, 10.40p	
STAR TREK [12A] <i>E</i> The youthful origins of Kirk, Spock and Co.	Mon, Wed & Thu: 1.20, 6.30p	
X-MEN ORIGINS - WOLVERIN His violent and romantic past.	E [12A] 🔏 Thu: 11.20p	
SENIORS' CLUB: THE CURIOUS CAS Brad Pitt is born old and gets younger	ی E OF BENJAMIN BUTTON [12A] Tue: 12.00p	
Odeon George St (0871 2244 007		
ANGELS AND DEMONS [15] Sequel to the Da Vinci Code.	aily: 2.00, 5.30, 8.45p 🖉	
LAST CHANCE HARVEY [12A Dustin Hoffman, Emma Thompson, in light		
LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT [18] K Mon - Thu: 1.15, 3.45, 6.30, 9.15 Slick remake of Wes Craven's highly unpleasant debut feature.		
LOOKING FOR ERIC [15]	Mon - Thu: 3.00, 5.45, 8.30p	

A lost postman needs a hero. Ken Loach & Eric Cantona. NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2 [PG] 🖉 Mon - Thu: 3.15, 6.00pr

TERMINATOR: SALVATION [12A] Mon - Thu: 2.15, 3.30, 5.15, 6.15, 8.00, 9.00pm More destruction and time travel. Subtitled, Tue 8.00, Thu 5.15. SENIOR SCREEN: GRAN TORINO [15] 🖄 Wed: 10.45am

Odeon Magdalen St (0871 2244 007)
 STAR TREK [12A]
 Mon, Wed & Thu: 2.15, 5.15, 8.15pm

 The youthful origins of Kirk, Spock and Co.
 Tue: 2.15, 5.15pm
THE HANGOVER [15] daily: 1.30, 4.00, 6.30, 9.00pm VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA [12A] 🚿 Tue: 8.15pm

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Club / 9.30pm-midnight. DJ set till 1am. Free entry / Backroom @ The Bully, 162 Cowley Road /244516 BROKEN RECORDS, SPARROW & THE WORKSHOP,

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Wed 17th

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£4, £3 (students), £2 (musicians) / Cellar Bar, Frewin Court, off Cornmarket PAPA ROACH, BUCKCHERRY / 7pm. £16 / 02 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, OX4 1UE / 0844 477 2000

DANCEHALL NICE AGAIN / 8pm, free / 07813 55448 / James St

THIN GREEN CANDLES, LIDDINGTON, CALI COLLECT / Experimentalists / 8pm. £4 / The Wheatsheaf, Wheatsheaf Alley, 129 H Street, 0X1 4DF / 721156

VIAROSA, THE EPSTEIN, THE ROUNDHEELS, THE DEPUTEES / Country & folk / £6 (adv) / Backroom @ The Bully, 162 Cowley Road /244516

WHOA FINALE! OPEN THROAT / Eclectic recital'n'rave: local & long distance acts / 9pm £5 / 07531 419504 / Isis Farmhouse, The Towing Path, Iffley Lock, OX4 4EL / 243854

THEATRE to Sat
Oxford Playhouse (305305)
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Tue 16th, Thu 18th: 7.30pm; Fri 19th: 8pm; Sat 20th: 2pm All-male ensemble company breathe new life into old Shakespeare. £11-£24
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE Wed 17th, Sat 20th: 7.30pm Thu 18th: 2pm
All-male ensemble company breathe new life into old Shakespeare. £11-£24
New Theatre (0844 8471585)
THE NAKED TRUTH Mon 15th - Wed 17th: 8pm Real Women, Real Lives. Comedy from Dave Simpson, writer of "Girls Night Out". £15
MAD ABOUT THE MUSICALS Thu 18th: 7.30pm
Electric production of Musical Showstoppers. £16.50 -£17.50.
Garsington Opera (361636)
MIRANDOLINA An innkeeper and her suitors. British premiere of new English edition by Jeremy Sams.
FIDELIO 🖉 Fri 19th: 6.20pm
Sung in German. Leonore disguises herself as Fidelio, a prison guard, to rescue her love.
LA CENERENTOLA 🖉 Sat 20th: 6.05pm Rossini's version of Cinderella. Sung in Italian.
Wadham College Chapel
HAMLET Tue 16th, Thu 18th & Fri 19th: 7.30pm Shakespeare's iconic play in the Gothic darkness. £5.
Oxford Town Hall
ASYLUM DIALOGUES Wed 17th: 7pm Based on conversations between asylum seekers & British citizens. £6, unwaged free.
Vaults Café, High St (Stephanie.kitchen@btopenworld.com)
SEE HOW I LAND - POETRY Thu 18th: 6.30 - 9pm Performance poetry: Oxford poets & exiled writers. Free, but booking required
North Wall Arts Centre (319450)
GASLIGHT Fri 19th: 7.30pm, Sat 20th: 2.30pm, 7.30pm 'I still see the ghost of a man, all through the night, madly seeking the thing he cannot find £12/£10
Merton College Fellows' Gardens
LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST Fri 19th & Sat 20th: 7.30pm Comedy in a pre-World-War-I setting, featuring live music from Elgar. £7/£5
Chipping Norton Theatre (01608 642350)
DANCING IN MY DREAMS Tue 16th, Thu 18th: 7.30pm
Wed 17th: 1.30pm & 7.30pm A musical play inspired by children whose lives were changed by wartime Britain. Also

showing at **The Barn, Blackbird Leys (249444)**, Fri 19th & Sat 20th: 7.30pm, £7/£5.

There's lots of information at fishonline.org, the website of the Marine Conservation Society (MCS not to be confused with the MSC, the Marine Stewardship Council) about fish to eat and to avoid. But here are some highlights:

Any kind of sole or flatfish - and. **notably, monkfish** - is overwhelmingly likely to have been bottom-trawled. The supertrawlers (subsidised globally with tax-payers' money) use vast nets, large enough in some cases to engulf cathedrals, to scrape up and flatten miles

of seabed (twice the area of the continental United States every year), desolating it and wiping out all the life thereon. This is a bit like bulldozing rainforest so we can eat sloths.

Most prawns you're likely to eat in this country will have been farmed by third-world producers in environmentally-catastrophic conditions. Coastal habitats such as mangrove deltas (one of the richest and most diverse natural habitats) all over developing countries (Thailand, Malaysia) are being replaced by prawn farms and polluted by the chemicals used to clean the tanks and keep the prawns alive under massively overcrowded conditions. After a 5 year stint has made the local water undrinkable, killed off the local wild-fish populations and put the local people at risk from pathogens bred in the tanks, the farmers (often city entrepreneurs) move on. Of course, the antibiotics, pesticides and colourants in farmed prawns don't make them the best choice for your health, either. Some northern wild-caught prawns, preferably from the North Sea, are a viable option if you can find them. However, the usual levels of bycatch - unwanted or cheap specimens which are thrown back dead - are horribly high.

More or less anywhere you buy unnamed "fish" in the UK, it's going to be **cod.** And cod is in trouble. So much so that in 2007 WWF tried to take the European Union to court over their failure to obey their own regulations (to issue a moratorium on fishing where stocks drop below a certain level). The EC First Council have now blocked this.

The collapse of the Atlantic cod stocks is a particularly clear illustration of a major factor that prevents recovery after overfishing: the weakening of the gene pool. Fish, particularly females, tend to get more fertile with age. If you catch all the big fish, not only do the smaller specimens remaining produce fewer young when the breeding season comes round than their larger companions would have done, but you gradually force the species to put more energy into maturing faster and less into building healthy cells - which can lead to genetic weakness in the stock and increase vulnerability to disease. Which, of course, is something that happens anyway if you destroy the bulk of the population. Before industrial fishing came along, an average-sized codfish was a yard long. Now they average 16 inches, because we simply don't let them live that long.

Some supermarkets, notably Sainsbury's, are making an effort: all their salmon, they boast, is farmed. But farming can be even more damaging to wild populations than wild fishing: notably in the case of the wild pink salmon crash in British Columbia. In 2002 there was a 97% drop in the wild population after infestations of sea-lice in farms near their runs. And it takes, at a conservative estimate, around 3 pounds of wild fish, ground into pellets, to make a pound of salmon flesh. Much of that, currently, comes from krill, the base of the northern food chain and

off to the nearest country that doesn't care, and land and process it there.



So no one's actually responsible for looking after our oceans. There's no global organisation, currently, that can force countries and corporations to be sensible, to use sustainable methods, to obey scientists' moratoria, to reduce bycatch or to fish with respect for breeding seasons and life-cycle.

And, of course, the other reason: our willingness to buy cheap and dirty. This puts pressure on supermarkets and restauranteurs, which in turn puts pressure on suppliers, who, even where legislation exists, are then tempted to mislabel.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

• Educate yourself. "Yeah, I hear the fish are in trouble" carries a lot less weight than "Is your cod caught in the Atlantic or the Pacific?" For a brilliant if traumatic in-depth analysis of the industry problems and some positive ideas for action, try Taras Grescoe's excellent book Bottom Feeder, a Bill Bryson-esque tour of fishing communities. The man loves eating fish and the book is an intelligent, forceful and entertaining investigation of how he and we are to continue doing so.

• Get picky, buy ethically. Don't buy fish if you don't know where it comes from, because if they're not making a fuss about it, it won't be sustainable. Suppliers in Europe are not yet required by law to say, for example, what species of tuna is in the tin. Some supermarkets such as Sainbury's and M & S and Asda are starting to sell sustainable fish in their own brand products, but while you can still buy John West's anonymous cod roe from the same shelf the gesture seems to me a bit hollow. But this is exactly where the consumer can make a difference. They won't change until a) we make it profitable for them, or b) it's too late. Your choice.

• Avoid plastic waste. A single one litre drinks bottle could break down into enough small fragments to put one on every mile of beach in the entire world. The tiny pieces of plastic, apart from actually smothering some areas (did you know there's an area of plastic rubbish in the Pacific twothirds the size of the United States?) chemically attract toxins, get into the food chain and cause a whole lot of problems for creatures like albatross, turtles, and humans.

• Ask in restaurants. And if you don't like the answer, or there isn't one, act upon it. And, more importantly, if you find a restaurant serving something ethical, praise them and order it! It's a lot of effort and expense for them to go to in a difficult industry - there's no legislation ordering it or tax breaks for doing it - and they need all the encouragement they can get.

Here are a couple of very short lists of some popular fish. See fishonline.org for continually updated info. You'll need to watch out for fishing methods: even if the species is well-populated and in season, it may have been caught by a method generating unacceptable levels of bycatch.

WHAT TO BUY:

· Herbivorous, organically farmed, freshwater species, such as carp (if you can find it). Organically-

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MEETINGS & LECTURES

Tue 16th

IRISH LANGUAGE GROUP / Informal group for those who would like to meet up to speak Irish. / 8.00pm to 10.00pm free / Half Moon Public House St Clements

THE FUTURE OF OXFORD'S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH & MEDICINE / Professor Sir John Bell / 1pm / Richard Doll Building, Old Road Campus, Headington, OX3 7LF

WHY DO WE NEED ALTERNATIVE WORLDS? / Professor Paul Fiddes & Dr Mark Atherton, will open discussion. / 5pm / Regent's Park College, Pusey St / 288120

BRITAIN - A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY? / Conference with Richard Sudworth: Faiths, Identity & Insecurity / 10.30am-3.30pm / www.cms-uk.org / 787400 / CMS, Watlington Rd

CARL NIELSEN & THEORIES OF SYMPHONISM / David ing, Manchester / 5.15pm, Free / Denis Arnold Hall, Faculty of Music, St Aldates / 276141

HEADSPACE ‰ THE MILL / Service for students, with advice & guidance about stress in all forms / Oxfordshire Mind / 7 - 9.30pm / www. oxfordshire-mind org.uk / 263758 / 46 Cowley Rd OX4 1H7

DEUTSCHSPRACHIGER STAMMTISCH / Speak German, play games, other activities / 8.30pm, free / deutscherstammtisch@vahoo.co.uk Anchor Pub, Kingston Rd

Wed 17th

LABOUR IN MELTDOWN / Oxford SWP Public Meeting with John Rees / Where next for the left? / All Welcome 7.30pm / http://oxswp. blogspot.com / The Mitre, High St

WORDS OF PEACE / Introductory film (about an hour) on inner peace Everyone welcome! / 7.30pm to 8.30pm. Free. / http://wordsofpeace.net / 311718 / West Oxford Community Centre, Botley Road, OX2 OBT THE LUO VISUAL HISTORY PROJECT / Talk by Christopher

Morton, Head of Photographic Collections/7pm (following AGM), free / www. prm.ox.ac.uk/friendsevents.html / 390489 / Pitt Rivers Museum Extension, entry via Robinson Close, off South Parks Rd. Disabled parking only. THE CORNER / Community hub for 50+. Café, activities etc. / Age

Concern Oxon / 10am, lunch 12pm / 07920 576385 / East Oxford Community Centre, 44b Princes St, OX4 1DD

SCIENCE INC: PROSONIX / The science of sound in the pharmaceutical industry. / £3 / £5 + Discovery Zone 19.30 / www. scienceoxfordlive.com / 810016 / Science Oxford Live DAVID PATTERSON SEMINAR / Y Granat: The Biblical story of

Jonah in medieval poems. / 8pm, free / www.ochjs.ac.uk / Yarnton Manor, 0X5 1PY / 377946

farmed trout, while carnivorous, is probably the only viable farmed option round here.

• Small fish such as sardines (though no longer the delicious anchovy - stocks have recently crashed, probably due to over-fishing for fertilizer)

• Anything low down on the food chain such as oysters, scallops etc

MSC certified Alaskan pollock

• MSC certified Cornish mackerel (in season)

WHAT TO BOYCOTT:

• All prawns, especially tiger prawns (except the northern species pandalus borealis, which is currently doing OK).

• Atlantic cod

Atlantic halibut

• Chilean sea bass

- The North Atlantic, Mediterranean or Bay of Biscay anchovy
- Shark (down, it is estimated, to 1% of the natural population levels)

Monkfish. Sorry.

• And any flatfish. Anything bottom-trawled, basically.

• And be very, very careful about tuna.

The End of the Line [12A], coming soon to cinemas near you, demonstrates the extraordinary fact that governments have to wait for the activists to excite film makers to spread the message to the public before they'll exercise their basic duty of care, not just for the fish but for the planet, which, hello, DISCO, PA, AND Lighting Equipment – hire and sales. 118 includes us! Miranda Rose

FILM REVIEW

Looking For Eric [15]

Ken Loach's Looking for Eric is really a story of two Erics. Eric Bishop is a postman suffering from depression, low selfesteem and middle age. His failed relationships and inability to control his delinguent sons expose his poor life choices and the emptiness of his existence. The only thing Eric has is his beloved Manchester United, and the nostalgic memories of watching his gallic footballing idol, Eric Cantona. Just as Eric's life seems too bleak. Cantona curiously manifests himself into Eric's consciousness as a life mentor. Using his footballing philosophy, Cantona strives to give Eric back his assertiveness and thus win back his estranged old flame.

Literature publicizing this film states it is a 'feel good film'. This is half true. This is actually a 'Ken Loach feel good film'. In typical Loach fashion there is a strong focus on social commentary. Poverty, crime and depression are all themes, and are displayed with trademark grit and unflinching detail. However, the film deals with Eric's attempt to just recapture his confidence, and to stop living in the past. This is 'gradually see a man pull himself out of the gutter' feel-good, rather than slushy Hollywood.

'I am not a man, I am Cantona!'

What is impressive is how much Loach gets right. It is funny in parts, but it's far from a comedy. The film is grounded in reality but has a streak of the fantastical (Eric Cantona as a manifestation ticks that box). And the film embraces football culture, but is accessible to non-football fans. The actors are particularly well cast, and the inclusion of Cantona seems more than just a marketing gimmick. Though revered, Cantona's ego and ill discipline (ask a Crystal Palace fan) was as renowned as his goalscoring ability. He was a 'flawed genius' with a tendency to self-destruct. This mirrors Eric only too well. Eric is a good man, and loval friend, but riddled with a similar affliction. It is these major similarities between Cantona and Eric that provide the crux of Loach's story.

Great film? Yes, Go see it? Yes, Feel-good? Yes, Just don't expect sun and rainbows! ****/5. **Tom Davis**

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