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The global rise of crustaceans: shelling out more for seafood?

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Abstract

Amidst widespread overfishing and climate change, global decapod crustacean (lobsters, crabs, and shrimp) fisheries are growing faster than any other major group. To date, little attention has been given to the socio-biological costs of a shift towards crustaceans. We address this knowledge gap using over six decades (1950-2016) of reported catch and nutrition data to examine spatial taxonomic and economic trends in global crustacean catches. We expand the existing view and suggest that direct and indirect enhancements are facultative to the global rise of crustaceans. Due to intrinsic biological qualities and inefficient capture methods, future increases will introduce ecological, and socioeconomic implications. A future of increasing crustacean dependence will generate more employment and profit, but will come at the cost of increased carbon emissions, decreased food production, weakened socioecological resilience, and lower biodiversity. Most of these costs will be realized by developing countries.

Keywords

global fisheries, crustaceans, climate change, management, resilience, ecosystem

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