

# Year 12 Geography

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# Chapter 1

## Global Sustainability    Aquaculture

### 1.1 Syllabus

#### **Sustainability in the contemporary world**

- Sustainability and sustainable development, including pillars of sustainability - social, economic, environmental and cultural
- Principles of ecologically sustainable development - precautionary principle, intergenerational equity, conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity
- Opportunities and challenges in planning for and achieving global sustainability  
Including:
  - the role of global forums, agreements and cooperation
  - levels of action at a range of scales, from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to practices in local communities, including actions by governments, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), non-government organisations (NGOs), corporations, community organisations and individuals
  - Indigenous Peoples' practices and benefit sharing
  - political, economic, technological, social, cultural and environmental influences

#### **Evaluating sustainability**

- The reasons for evaluating and monitoring global sustainability
- A range of criteria for evaluating the sustainability of economic activities

#### **Investigation of a global economic activity**

Students study ONE global economic activity, for example:

- agriculture
- energy production
- fishing
- forestry
- manufacturing
- mining

- tourism.

For the global economic activity studied, students:

- evaluate the sustainability of the activity, using one or more criteria
- examine a range of strategies for sustainability
- critically analyse ONE strategy.

Students investigate:

- The nature and spatial patterns of the global economic activity
- Influences on the global economic activity  
Including:
  - biophysical
  - economic
  - technological
  - political/organisational
- Current trends and future directions

## 1.2 Introduction to Aquaculture

"Farming of aquatic species in controlled or semi-controlled conditions" Eg. Salmon, barramundi, lobsters (can be semi-controlled), crabs, prawns, oysters, scallops, seaweed Non food: pearl scallops, coral (people keeping pets), crocodile skin Pets: goldfish

In situ → In the environment

Ex situ → Isolated to the environment

Eg. Oyster farms in situ may be affected by external factors like a sewage spill

### 1.2.1 History

Although the Brewarrina fish traps are one of the oldest human constructions, they aren't real farms  
Roman oyster farm Chinese carp farm

Aquaculture is practised across a wide variety of locations and species. Can be:

- Marine (mariculture), estuary or freshwater (in-land)  
Mariculture is currently underutilised, vast ocean space that isn't being used
- In-situ or ex-situ
- Fin-fish, crustacean, molluscs, or plants (usually algae)  
Carp (trash fish)
- For human consumption, fishmeal, or fish oil
- For local consumption or for export earning  
Norway and Chile grow the majority of the world's salmon, and is exports  
Changes the nature that the fish grows

Aquaculture is **NOT** fishing

In 2018, aquaculture produced 114.5 million tonnes in live weight, with a total farm-gate sale value of US\$263.6 billion Aquaculture accounted for 46% of the total seafood production and 52% of fish for human consumption China produces and consumes the largest amount of aquaculture, but also more broadly Asian countries

There aren't that many inland waters, so inland fisheries do not have a significant amount of production<sup>1</sup>

Types of Economic Activity

- Primary - Farming
- Secondary - Manufacturing, producing
- Tertiary - Distribution of goods, using produced goods
- Quaternary - Researcher of salmon

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<sup>1</sup>Carp and tilapia are not nice - David Latimer

### 1.2.2 Distribution of Aquaculture

Aquaculture is mainly centred around Asia, with China representing around 60% of global aquaculture. Fish is common in South-east Asia, especially with river fish eg. Vietnam. Other countries just catch their fish.

African countries do not have the development or GDP to farm fish. Culturally also doesn't eat fish.<sup>2</sup>

Developing countries are increasing their share of international fish trade. Countries with large fishing catches often have larger aquaculture production.

Various places have cultural preferences and natural advantages for the production of particular species.

- Predominantly carp<sup>3</sup>
- Seaweeds
- Tilapia
- Oysters
- Clams
- Catfish
- Prawns - Warm species
- Salmon, trouts, smelts - Salmon is expensive
- Freshwater fishes

As China gets richer and richer, they will seek to eat more expensive fish, therefore increasing the demand.

## 1.3 Draft Nature and Spatial Patterns Text

The text below is a reasonable, band 4-5 response to the stimulus prompt **“Examine the nature and spatial patterns of ONE global economic activity”**. Use the FAO report below to help you edit the text into a strong Band 6 response, complete with a clear thesis, detailed information and vocabulary, and well structured paragraphs. Your finished text should be around 300-500 words in length.

### Draft Text

Aquaculture is global economic activity whereby people grow fish for food and trade. Aquaculture takes place around the globe, giving people both food and money.

Aquaculture is really old, having been practised for years and years. However, people grow lots of different species today. It's important to state that aquaculture and fishing are different activities.

The economic activity of aquaculture can be carried out in both rich and poor countries. However, different countries tend to practise aquaculture differently and for different reasons. Aquaculture is mostly practised in rich countries.

Aquaculture is also practised in different environments. Moreover, these different types of aquaculture are not growing at the same speed. Some types of aquaculture are growing much more rapidly than others.

### Comments

- Use stats

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<sup>2</sup>“I don't like river fish, it's gross” - David Latimer

<sup>3</sup>“River fish have a bland, muddy flavour” - David Latimer, D1 river fish hater

- In an "examine the nature and spatial distribution" question, evenly allocate writing to each part
- Specify location; Asia is very broad but aquaculture is focused around only 5

## 1.4 Influences on the global economic activity

"How do different things affect the activity of aquaculture"

Nature, spatial patterns, future changes, sustainability

Biophysical	How the biophysical environment and ecosystems influence aquaculture
Economic	Demand and supply factors
Technological	New developments that increase sustainability
Political/Organisational	How is it controlled

### 1.4.1 Biophysical Factors

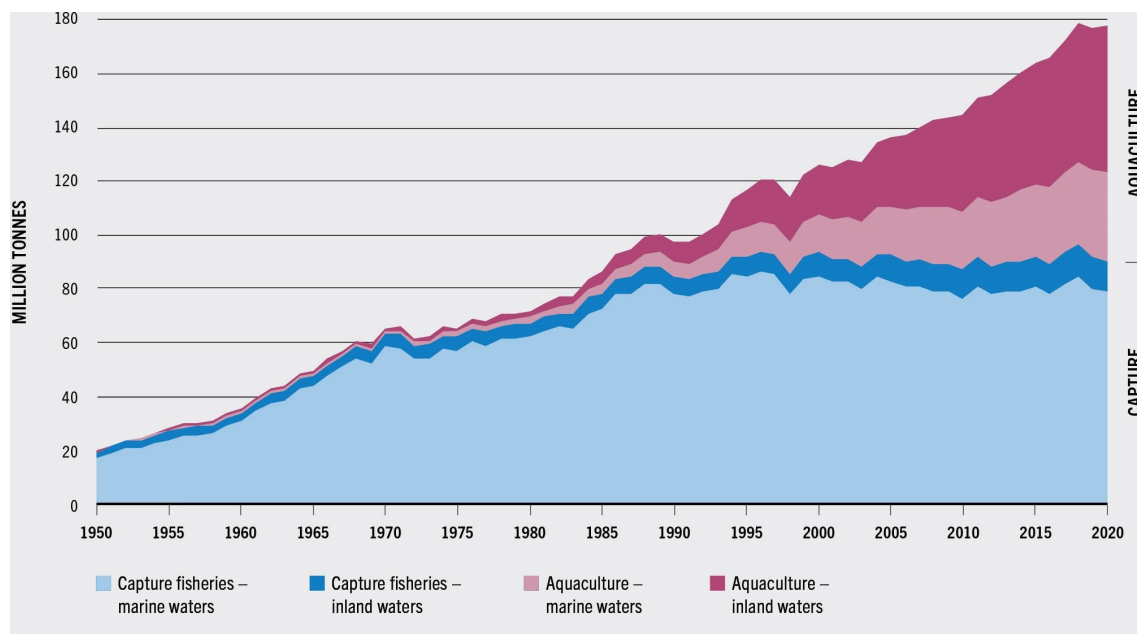
There are 622 species recognised by the FAO as being produced by aquaculture with each species requiring its own specific biophysical requirements

Local water conditions can impart "**merroir**" to seafood → the flavour it has

Local conditions flavour specialisation and give places competitive advantages

- Atlantic Salmon production is dominated by cold deep waters found in Norway and Chile
- Salmonids have become the largest single fish commodity by value
- Shrimp production benefits from brackish, warm tropical waters

Ex situ aquaculture attempts to separate aquaculture from the biophysical environment by controlling for temperature and chemistry. However, it is difficult to reproduce the conditions cheaply



## Water Chemistry

The local bedrock and substrates will impact various chemical characteristics to the water, such as nitrates, phosphates, heavy metals Heavy metals are present due to mining operations that

Salinity is one of the most important characteristics of the water used in aquaculture

- Briny - High salinity
- Saline - Seawater, salt lakes
- Brackish - Estuaries, mangrove swamps
- Fresh - Ponds, lakes, river, streams

Eg. Oyster farmers will move their oysters up and down stream to control the way they grow

Salmon farms need high flow of water to account for the waste produced by the high concentration of salmon Water plants can generally be grown anywhere

66% finfish, 22% crustaceans, 12% molluscs

## Climate

Atlantic Salmon require deep water with temperatures below 10°C giving Norway and Chile an advantage

Vannamei Shrimp require brackish, estuarine water that does not fall below 20 °C giving South-East Asian nations an advantage

## Ecological

Aquaculture can have a highly detrimental interaction with local and global ecologies. For example:

- Carbon emissions from feed catch trawling
- By-catch from trawling
- Land clearing of mangroves

Aquaculture ventures often have to work with nearby human settlements. Some communities use this to produce multi-trophic production systems

Disease outbreaks are increasing in aquaculture due to **monoculture**

Eg. An in situ production system:

- Food pellets aren't completely consumed, increasing the concentration of food in an area
- The introduction of non-native species that are highly competitive
  - Bad weather can increase the likelihood of escapes
- Predators like birds can attack birds, increasing the overall level of fish stress
- Bulk antibiotics applied to fish farms can impact resistance in future
  - This can extend to humans consuming the fish
- Fat salmon are better to eat, however to become this way they are overfed and lazy. If salmon escape, they can breed lazy salmon in the natural environment <sup>4 5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>"How do you get a fat salmon" - Latimer

<sup>5</sup>"You want a fat, lazy salmon" - Latimer



To mitigate the greater environmental impacts:

- Make the farm ex situ
- Lower the density of the farm (However this lowers profit)
- Environmental Laws → Developing nations are also able to use lax environmental laws to develop coastal land for aquaculture

### **Positive Ecological Impacts**

Oyster farming industries can filter estuaries and apply pressure to keep waterways clean - encourages community to reduce pollution

## **1.4.2 Economic Factors**

### **Commodity Prices**

Variable exchange rates and market prices for export commodities will modify production, including access to feed meal.

In recent years, other major producing countries have reported low market prices of staple species, reflecting market saturation at least seasonally and locally for these mass-produced species.

Salmon and avocado sushi was invented by Norwegians to encourage Japanese to purchase it. Before introduction, Japan was not a major salmon consumer but was wealthy and Norwegians had an excess.

The **commodification** of aquaculture produce also placed demand to exceed environmental capacity. Commodification drives the production of more goods.

### **Differences in HIC and LIC aquaculture**

In some LICs, low labour costs can be a competitive advantage for production.

However, capital can be difficult to source in LICs - Greater degree of risk, less willingness for investors.

HICs will use the high value of their markets to demand higher quality produce.

China has been accused of devaluing its yuan to promote exports. If their exchange rate is lower, their exports are cheaper, people will buy more, better for the Chinese market. (Denied by China ofc)

### **Urbanisation**

People are increasingly living in cities with higher incomes and better infrastructure to facilitate fish purchases.

### **Labour Specialisation**

In HICs, changes in life expectations have made it difficult to find adequate labour - It is difficult to get people to work in far away aquaculture farms. Is promoted in Australia by using Tongan migrants as labour.

In LICs, small scale farms account for much greater rates of production.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified that aquaculture utilises child and slave labour, but notes there is limited availability of evidence.

People from Myanmar run to Thailand to escape the government. However questionable law enforcement in Thailand promotes illegal labour. One solution to this is international agreements and tariffs, however this is unlikely because people want their shrimp cheap. It is then a responsibility of the consumer to check the source of produce

### 1.4.3 Technological Factors

Selective breeding and GMO (genetically modified organism) technologies are common in aquaculture.

Used to:

- Improve market appeal
- Address disease
- Promote growth

Often used in the salmon industry because salmon is more expensive

Development in technologies for production are also important:

- Four stroke engine replacements → are less polluting than two stroke engines that release exhaust into the water, increasing pollution
- Optical scanner → can be used to replace human labour, ie. capital
- Improved cage netting → stronger materials for netting, double walled netting, overhead enclosure. Reducing escapees

### Transport and Retail Technologies

Improvements in refrigerated transport have boosted trade and consumption of aquaculture products.

Internet sales and marketing have increased people's access to farm gate sales and reduced the cost and control of market sales. People are now able to purchase directly from the supplier, cutting out the middle man in trade.

Geospatial technologies allow for tracking and more efficient trade.

### 1.4.4 Organisational Factors

International governance:

- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) UN organisation that provides advice
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) polices trade
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) monitor conditions of labour

National scale:

- NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) peak controlling organisation, gives permits, permission
- NSW Food Authority eg. tells oyster farmers what they can and can't sell

The size of the Chinese market. Supply due to demand factors allows major traders to influence what is produced

## Ownership

A wide variety of farm owners are responsible for global aquaculture production.

Increasingly, large companies are looking to undertake **vertical and horizontal integration**

As well as producers, in Australia, supermarkets are also able to control prices. Large aquaculture companies are able to use **economies of scale** to gain control over large market shares.

**Vertical integration:** Company aims to own the entire production process, however all the liabilities are placed on the company.

**Horizontal integration:** Company purchases competing companies in the same industry, eg. Cermaq is a major salmon and trout producer owned by Mitsubishi. For some companies, aquaculture is not their main goal, rather food in general.

## Control

Supermarket chains exert significant power over consumers <sup>6</sup>

Most people buy their food from supermarkets.

## Labelling and Decision Making

Sea food labelling rules change consumer preference and may require government intervention.

Australian made labels don't provide that much information about the product. If it is produced in many countries, the label will not say every country it has been in.

Manufactured products are considered to be from that country. Eg. Malaysian prawns are labelled as Malaysian if raw, but if sauce is put on them in Australia, then they are manufactured in Australia.

### 1.4.5 Political Factors

#### International Trade

Tariffs are a tax on an imported good. Governments impose tariffs so the local businesses can compete with cheaper imports.

Subsidies are similar, but work in reverse. The government pays local farmers so that they can continue production. Protects domestic employment.

Eg. Sugarcane farmers in Queensland are given money to maintain employment. Queensland is a swing state, so governments are always going to provide funding.

A quota is a limit of number of items imported into a country.

Import and export barriers to free trade are used to protect local industries.

However, trade wars have also affected aquaculture products and commodity prices - particularly soybeans.

Countries are likely to apply tariffs on each other, elevating economic tensions.

Diplomatic relationships and the WTO are important in resolving disputes.

The WTO also regulates Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) which affects trademarks, geographic indications, patents and industrial designs.

A particular barramundi species can be patented, allowing you to market the quality of the barramundi.

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<sup>6</sup>The power of companies has always been extreme and have power in politics through funding.

## **Asia-Pacific Trade**

Australia participates in a range of bilateral and multilateral agreements which facilitate greater trade with the Asia-Pacific region. Trade relationships are often overlapping

However, trade can also place environments at risk from exotic species and pathogens. It can cause confusion whether it is imposed as a biosecurity risk or as a trade restriction.

## **Legislation**

Growth of aquaculture has outpaced the development of legislation and legal frameworks to govern the industry

Land clearing has been unchecked in some places

Development of a valuable industry has been given precedence over environmental concerns.

Research, monitoring and lobbying by NGOs like Greenpeace and WWF provides political pressure on nation-states.

## **International Geopolitics**

UNCLOS (1982) - Defines the 200 nautical mile boundaries for Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)

Ramsar - Defines a number of internationally significant wetlands.

CITES - Prevents trade in endangered species. For example the trade in illegally fished caviar from the sturgeon fish which is now mostly farmed.

COP negotiations - Pressure on nations to change agriculture practices and prevent land clearing

Nine dash line defined by China is still hotly contested due to fishing resources. China is a large country with large food demand

Niger river catchment is the only source of water for some countries. Climate change means water is very important in the catchment. Conflict and destabilisation means that water resources are very valuable. The pollution of water resources due to aquaculture or the use of water in general could contribute to the conflict.