

Wild fish consumption can balance nutrient retention in farmed fish: research

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A recent study, published in *Nature Food*, investigated the nutrient flow from wild fish used as feed to farmed salmon. The study found that six out of nine nutrients were decreased in the salmon fillet, including calcium, iodine, iron, omega-3, vitamin B12, and vitamin A.

However, there were increased levels of selenium and zinc. Most wild forage fish have a greater density and range of micronutrients than farmed salmon fillets and meet the dietary nutrient recommendations at smaller portion sizes than farmed Atlantic salmon. Omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke, were found to be higher in wild fish than in farmed salmon.

The lead author of the study, Dr David Willer, from the University of Cambridge, suggests that people should consider eating a wider variety of wild fish species, such as sardines, mackerel and anchovies, to get more essential nutrients straight to their plate. In the UK, many adults and teenage girls have deficiencies of iodine, selenium and iron.

The researchers found that consuming one-third of current food-grade wild-feed fish directly would be the most efficient way of maximising nutrients from the sea. The senior author of the study, Dr James Robinson, from Lancaster University, suggests that prioritising nutritious seafood for people can help improve both diets and ocean sustainability.