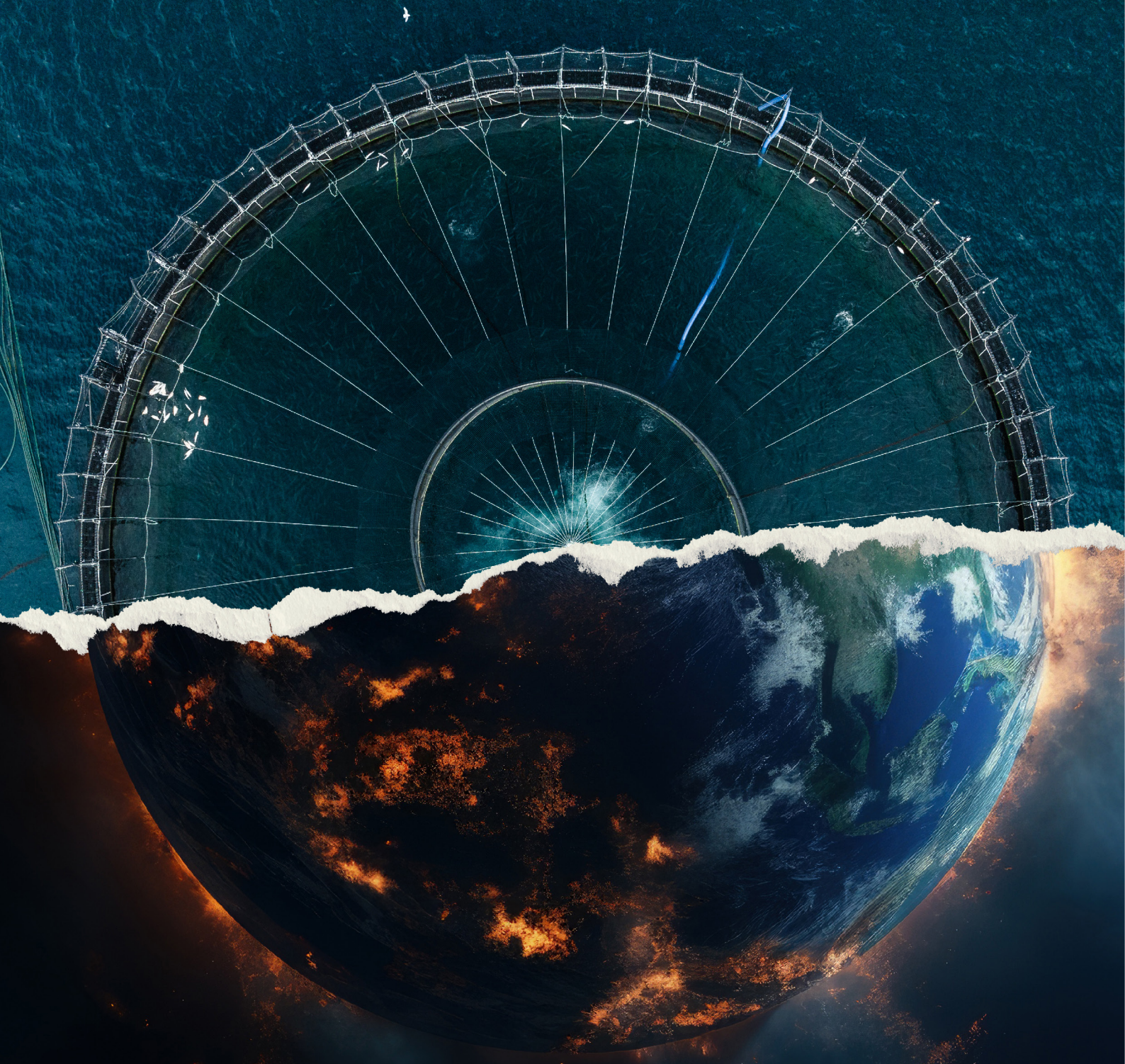
SUMMARY REPORT

SALMON : THE PINK BOMB OF AN EXHAUSTED FOOD SYSTEM



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ocean is the primary source of life on Earth: a major oxygen producer, this blue lung is a great climate regulator and home to millions of animal species. More than 3 billion humans depend on it for their livelihood. However, marine ecosystems are being devoured by the current food system. Marked by unsustainable overfishing and intensive aquaculture, it deepens social inequalities and endangers marine life. This is the case for the Atlantic salmon, which, like the emperor penguin, joined the IUCN Red List in late 2023.

In this context, **the salmon industry is an ecological and social bomb**. Its intensive farming practices lead to disastrous consequences: ecosystem pollution, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, animal cruelty, ecological imbalances, resource plundering of Southern countries, and the exacerbation of overfishing.

Despite this, salmon production, dominated by a handful of multinationals, has experienced hyper-growth on a global scale over the past few decades. This situation is likely to worsen as the world leader, Norway, aims to triple its annual production by 2050, notably by increasing its production capacity through new ultra-energy-intensive and impactful technologies (land-based and offshore farming). Far from addressing environmental concerns, the salmon industry minimises and hides its ecological and human impacts through heavy greenwashing and marketing techniques such as eco-labels, and by creating the illusion of contributing to global food security and human health through the provision of omega-3 (DHA/EPA).

France, the biggest European salmon consumer and the fourth in the world, is a major player in the sector and bears particular responsibility for directing practices. However, depending on the type of omega 3 (DHA/EPA or ALA), 89% to 99% of the French population have omega-3 deficiencies. Therefore, despite the high consumption of salmon in France, the needs of a large majority of the population are not being met. This finding calls into question the value of our overconsumption of salmon and highlights the urgent need to transform our food systems.

This report shows that it is urgent to mitigate the harmful effects of unsustainable food production methods such as the salmon industry, which threatens the most fragile marine, terrestrial, and human ecosystems already under pressure due to the current climate emergency. **Today, it is unjustifiable to allow this industry to continue producing salmon that meets no necessity—neither in terms of global food security nor human health.** Protecting the Ocean, life on Earth, and future generations requires the collective adoption of a diet that, all the while remaining delicious, is more respectful of the environment and societies.

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NUMBERS

3 million tonnes of farmed Atlantic salmon, i.e. **600 million salmon**, have been slaughtered worldwide by 2021, while in the wild, the *Salmo salar* has been listed as **«near-threatened» on the IUCN red list by 2023.**

Four countries alone account for 90% of the world's salmon production: Norway, Chile, UK and Canada. France imports **99%** of its salmon, and **98%** is raised in cages.

To feed and raise a single farmed salmon, up to 440 wild fish need to be caught. According to scientists, 90% of the fish captured through fishmeal fisheries could be used to directly feed humans.

76 % of the world's soy production is used to feed farmed animals, compared with **20%** for human consumption. **Salmon is the second-largest consumer of soy after chicken.**

On land, a 10,000-tonne salmon farm consumes 100,000 MWh per year, equivalent to the **energy consumption of a city with over 39,000 inhabitants**. At sea, nutrient discharges from the Norwegian sector are on a par with the **sewage of around 10 million people.**

Salmon densities in land-based farms range from **70 kg to 150 kg** per cubic meter of water. In 2023 in Norway alone, **100 million farmed salmon died.**

More than **300 million microplastic particles** are released into the ocean every year by marine aquaculture alone. Fish and seafood account for up to **86%** of dietary exposure to PFAS in adults.

France is one of the world's top 3 consumers of salmon. Yet, depending on the type of omega 3 (DHA/EPA or ALA), **89% to 99% of the French population have omega-3 deficiencies.**

KEY MESSAGES

1

Food is the most powerful lever to preserve the Ocean and achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Transforming the food system must address the need to feed all humans equitably while respecting planetary boundaries, animal health, and human health.

2

A systemic approach is necessary for this transformation to succeed, which must be based on the **co-responsibility** of businesses, the State, and civil society, as well as multi-level and **multi-sector action**. It should primarily focus on reducing fish consumption, investing in low-trophic aquaculture, supporting ecological fishing, and promoting education on planetary health.

3

Gradually abandoning destructive industries such as carnivorous fish farming (salmon) is essential to move towards a sustainable food system.

Food, a lever for environmental action

According to the IPCC, the diet with the greatest potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions is the vegan diet.

TO PRIORITISE

- Seaweed and shellfish farming
- Coastal fishing using hook-and-line for foraging fish (mackerel)
- Herbivorous fish aquaculture

TO BAN

- Destructive fishing practices and their subsidies: deep-sea trawling
- Consumption of carnivorous fish (cod, tuna, salmon)

Food, a lever for planetary health

Salmon is the second most eaten fish in France. **However, according to ANSES, 99% of adults have insufficient daily ALA omega-3 intake, and 89% are at risk of insufficient combined daily intake of EPA and DHA omega-3s.**

The French College of General Medicine recommends adopting a diet that is 90% plant-based by increasing the consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and oils rich in omega-3 (canola, walnut, olive).

Towards a responsible and committed private sector

From the culinary world to large-scale distribution, including the hotel industry and large corporations, initiatives exist and should be supported:

· **Greening menus:** Like Alain Ducasse, who is calling to reverse the proportions to achieve a ratio of 80% plant-based products and 20% animal proteins
· **Removing endangered species from plates:** Like the 21 “Relais & Châteaux” chefs
· **Guiding sustainable consumption through price parity**

LET'S CREATE A NEW WAVE.

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