



MERT GOKALP

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A must-watch documentary about bluefish in Turkey

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MELİS ALPHAN >

Until the 1980s, dolphins were mercilessly fished in the Marmara Sea and the Black Sea. The state distributed arms, ammunition and loans to dolphin fishermen for them to fish more. For years, in Black Seahouses, rags immersed in dolphin oil were used in lamps. Leave aside the screams of dolphins when they were hit by the fish spear, dynamite or bullet, the Sea of Marmara turned reddish with dolphin blood.

When the state banned dolphin fishing, then the fishermen switched to school fish. Today, fishermen, with the help of their high-tech equipment, cast their kilometers-long nets in front of schools of fish and stop them from passing through the Bosphorus. These fish have been migrating through the Bosphorus to be able to feed themselves for 8,000 years.

The fleets of fishermen caused the population of the fish in the Black Sea and the Marmara to decline. When the decreased fish population was inadequate to feed the tens of thousands of boats, illegal fishing started in every portion of the sea in the country. Scores of marine species were massacred. For each kilogram of fish caught, 10 kilograms of fish were thrown away. Seed fish were caught without even being able to breed once.

Each year, 700,000 tons of anchovies are caught and two thirds of this goes to fish farms as feed. The fish farms which are supposed to be sustainable do not produce new fish; on the contrary, they have been transformed into expensive production units by causing overfishing of anchovies.

The “Lüfer” (bluefish) documentary being shown at the 1st Istanbul Independent Films Festival pursues the rapidly vanishing bluefish in our waters while depicting the brutal and unmonitored fishing here; it throws our consumer habits back in our faces.

The camera goes to the Istanbul Sea Food Wholesale Market where all marine species are brought, including all those on the verge of extinction in the Marmara Sea. The ones that are prohibited for sale are also there. The auctioneers are tipped off before any controller arrives and takes measures. The fines are not a deterrent anyway.

The next stop in the documentary is the Kadıköy Fish Market on the Asian side of Istanbul. Shoppers in Istanbul do not care very much about the size of the bluefish. Most of the bluefish on sale at the counter are at illegal sizes.

A traditional fisherman, Emre, says that equipment banned in Japan is used in Turkey.

There used to be giant tuna fish passing through the Bosphorus that would hit the waterside mansions at night. Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi mentions the catching of swordfish on the Bosphorus in the 17th century. The swordfish which were caught in the thousands at one time have not stopped by Istanbul since the 1950s. The abundance of fish in Istanbul was reported to rival Marseilles and Venice in the 1500s. When schools of bluefish were passing through the Bosphorus, ship traffic would be halted.

Well, now, Turkey has caught more than 50 percent of the bluefish in the world; it reached its peak with 32,000 tons in 1982. In 2002, it was 25,000 tons and in 2013, the bluefish catch was down to 5,000 tons. That's because there are almost no bluefish left.

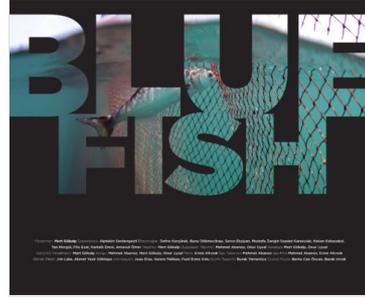
Unless its fishing is banned, bluefish will be consumed until they are extinct from the Mediterranean. Officials should watch Mert Gokalp's "Lüfer" documentary.

February/27/2017

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VİMEO VOD'da
gösterimde..!!!!!!*



*Canım İstanbul'un,
canan-ı lüferin peşinde
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Mantaların Dansı

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