



VeriFish

The sustainability indicator framework
to communicate responsible aquafood
production and consumption patterns

VeriFish Photo Challenge Participant Toolkit

Your Guide to Creating a Powerful Photo Submission

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Topic Guidelines

Categories of the Challenge:

Category	Focus	Photo Examples
Environmental Sustainability	Protecting marine habitats, reducing overfishing, carbon footprint..	Clean oceans, responsible fishing practices, sustainable aquaculture setups. Solutions to marine pollution or habitat restoration.
Nutrition and Health	Promoting the nutritional benefits of sustainable seafood as a healthy protein source.	Seafood dishes, families enjoying nutritious seafood meals, street food and predominance of Blue protein over Red protein.
Socio-Economic impact	Supporting local communities, ethical labour practice and fair trade.	The role of fishers (men and women) in sustainable practices. Images celebrating traditions and livelihoods connected to seafood. New approaches to fisheries.

Description of the Pillars: Why are they essential for Seafood Sustainability?

Environmental sustainability ensures the long-term health of marine ecosystems, critical to maintain biodiversity, support fisheries and combat climate change. Issues like overfishing, habitat destruction and pollution threaten the delicate balance of ecosystems, potentially leading to species extinction and the degradation of vital marine habitats. Sustainable practices minimize environmental impacts, ensuring that seafood can be harvested and produced responsibly without depleting natural resources or disrupting the ecosystem's ability to regenerate.

The importance of seafood sustainability is reflected in **Nutrition and Health** as seafood is a nutrient-dense, climate-friendly source of protein, omega3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals, making it vital for human health. Seafood also supports heart health, brain development, and overall well-being, particularly in populations that may lack access to other high-quality protein sources. Sustainable seafood production ensures that these nutritional benefits are available for future generations. Additionally, minimises harmful practices that could introduce contaminants or degrade the quality of the seafood supply.

Socio-economic aspects are important because the seafood industry supports millions of livelihoods, from small scale fishers to large aquaculture enterprises, and also plays a critical role in local economies, particularly in coastal communities. Socio-economic sustainability ensures fair labour practices, equitable distribution of resources, and the preservation of cultural traditions tied to seafood. By supporting ethical and community-driven seafood practices, we can promote social equity, strengthen food security and ensure the industry remains viable for generations to come.

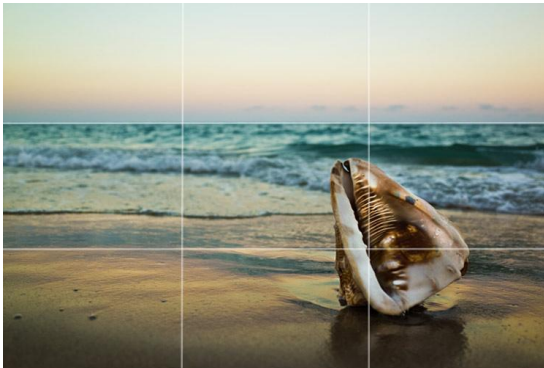
Prompts for Inspiration:

- "How does your photo highlight the balance between seafood production and environmental conservation?"
- "Can you show how seafood supports a healthy lifestyle?"
- "What story does your photo tell about the people behind sustainable seafood?"

Photography tips:

Composition

- **Rule of Thirds:** Use the rule of thirds to divide your frame into nine equal sections with two vertical and two horizontal lines. Position your subject along these lines or at their intersections to create a balanced and visually appealing composition.



- **Experiment with angles:** Try shooting from different perspectives for different effects. Low angles for a dramatic effect, high angles for a comprehensive view, or side angles for depth.
- **Foreground and Background Elements:** Incorporate Foreground elements to add layers and depth to your photo.

Lighting

- **Natural Light:** The use of natural light, especially during the “golden hour” (shortly after sunrise or before sunset) when the sunlight is soft and warm to add richness and a magical glow to your photos.
- **Diffuse harsh light:** On bright sunny days, harsh sunlight can create unwanted shadows. Use tools like a piece of cloth, white cardboard, or even your hand to diffuse the light or create a softer shadow.
- **Artificial Light:** If shooting indoors, use a lamp or LED light to illuminate your subject while avoid using direct flash.

Focus and Clarity

- **Keep the Subject in Focus** as a way to ensure your subject is sharp and stands out clearly from the background.
- **Declutter your frame** to remove unnecessary distractions in the background or frame your subject against simple backdrops for a cleaner image.
- **Action shots** help to add life and context to your photos.
- **Reflections and patterns** give more life to your pictures.

Smartphone Tips

- **Activate grid lines** on your device to help align your subject using the rule of Thirds.
- **Use portrait modes** to create a beautiful depth-of-field effect and draw attention to your subject.



Caption Writing Tips – Tell a Story That Inspires

A great photo is even more powerful when paired with an **engaging caption**. Your caption should provide context, create an emotional connection, and align with the **sustainability theme** of the challenge.

Key Elements of a Strong Caption

- **Describe the Scene** – What is happening in the photo?
- **Highlight the Sustainability Message** – Why does this image matter?
- **Make it Personal** – Connect it to a real experience, place, or community.
- **Keep it Concise** – 50-150 words maximum.
- **End with a Call to Action** – Encourage the audience to think, learn, or take action.

Caption Formula

- **What?** – Describe what the viewer is seeing.
- **Why?** – Explain why it matters for sustainability.
- **Impact?** – How does it contribute to a better future?

Example Captions

Environmental Sustainability:

"At sunrise, a fisherman repairs his net by hand, ensuring no plastic waste ends up in the sea. Sustainable practices like this protect marine ecosystems, keep fish populations stable, and support coastal communities. Every responsible choice, from gear selection to catch limits, helps maintain the delicate balance of our oceans. Conservation isn't just about big initiatives—it's also in the small, mindful actions of those who rely on the sea. What steps can we all take to safeguard our waters for future generations?"

Nutrition & Health:

"From ocean to plate, responsibly sourced seafood is a powerhouse of essential nutrients, providing high-quality protein and omega-3s that support heart and brain health. Choosing sustainable fish not only benefits our well-being but also helps protect marine ecosystems by reducing overfishing. Every purchase we make impacts the future of seafood. By supporting ethical fisheries and informed choices, we ensure

that future generations can continue enjoying seafood without harming the planet. What's your favorite sustainable seafood dish?"

Socio-Economic Impact:

"These hands have worked the sea for generations, carrying on the traditions of small-scale, sustainable fishing. However, challenges such as overfishing, climate change, and unfair market conditions threaten their way of life. Supporting local fisheries means protecting these livelihoods, ensuring fair wages, and preserving cultural heritage. Every time we choose responsibly sourced seafood, we contribute to an industry that values both people and the planet. How can we empower small-scale fishers to thrive in a changing world? "

Pro Tip:

- Avoid overly **technical** language.
- **Emotion & storytelling** make captions memorable.
- Use **questions** or **facts** to engage the reader.



Ethical Photography – Responsible Storytelling

Photography is a **powerful tool**, but it comes with **responsibilities**. We want every submission to **respect** the environment, people, and cultures captured in the image.

Ethical Guidelines

Respect for Marine Life & Ecosystems

- Never **disturb or manipulate** wildlife to get a shot.
- Avoid **touching or moving** marine species (e.g., corals, fish, sea turtles).
- If capturing seafood, show it **ethically sourced** (e.g., sustainable fishing methods).

Avoid Exploitative Storytelling

- Do not **sensationalize** or misrepresent sustainability challenges.
- Avoid photos that show **harmful fishing practices** unless used as **educational awareness**.

No Photos of Recognizable People

- For privacy reasons, do not submit images that include **identifiable individuals**. Pictures of children and vulnerable adults are strictly forbidden.
- If people are in the background, ensure **they are not the focal point**.

Authenticity Over Staging

- Capture **real moments** rather than setting up artificial scenes.
- Do not add or remove elements in post-editing to change the message of your photo.

Cultural & Local Respect

- If you take photos in **local fishing communities**, ensure their **traditions and dignity are respected**.
- Represent people in a **positive, respectful way**—avoid stereotypes or misleading narratives.

Pro Tip:

- Consider **how your image might be perceived** by the people in it and the wider audience.
- **Sustainability storytelling is about truth, not just aesthetics.**



Final Checklist Before Submitting Your Photo

- ✓ Is my **caption clear, engaging, and aligned with sustainability goals**?
- ✓ Does my **photo respect ethical guidelines** (no AI, no people, no harmful practices)?
- ✓ Have I ensured my **image is original and meets the challenge rules**?
- ✓ Is my **photo size and format correct**?

Let your image and words create impact! Your submission could **inspire thousands** to make better choices for our planet.

Ready? **Upload your photo now!**