

# *The SeaChoice Business Guide for Ocean-friendly Seafood*

Helping business  
make smart seafood  
decisions for today  
and tomorrow



## Introduction



Our oceans offer us delicious and nutritious seafood, and much more. Healthy oceans help sustain coastal communities with jobs, provide recreation, culture, and natural beauty. Without healthy oceans, we would not have enough oxygen in the atmosphere or the protein needed to support our global demand for food.



## The Issue?

Today, no part of our oceans remains unaffected by human activities. With 70 percent of the world's fish stocks now harvested at capacity or in decline, overfishing is one of the greatest challenges facing our oceans. In response to a growing global population and increasing pressure on our oceans, aquaculture now provides close to half of the world's seafood supply. Some aquaculture practices come at the expense of our oceans with the potential of causing habitat damage, disease, escapes and pollution.

## The Solution?

Fortunately, there are many examples of both wild and farmed seafood that are caught or produced responsibly in ways that can be sustained without undermining the overall health of ecosystems. We all have a role to play in making ocean-friendly seafood choices. Through creative partnerships that support responsible seafood production, SeaChoice and seafood businesses can work to create a better future for communities, businesses and our oceans. Ensuring a stable supply of seafood starts with making a commitment to procure and provide ocean-friendly seafood.

Choosing responsibly sourced seafood for your business is a valuable way to support best practices in the fishing and aquaculture industries which, in turn, will help ensure our ocean resources last long into the future. Businesses can be leaders and have a collective influence to help shift the market demand towards more ocean-friendly seafood options.

## What is Ocean-friendly seafood?

*SeaChoice defines ocean-friendly seafood as fish or shellfish that is caught or farmed in a manner that can be sustained over the long-term without compromising the health of marine ecosystems.*



## Who is SeaChoice?

SeaChoice works to help Canadian businesses and consumers make smart seafood decisions for today and tomorrow. By working together with Canadians to responsibly choose their seafood, we can support the long-term health of marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

SeaChoice is supported by a coalition of five conservation organizations from across Canada, including the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Living Oceans Society and Sierra Club (B.C. Chapter). SeaChoice draws on and benefits from the wide range of expertise and knowledge of the personnel in each organization.



We assess the sustainability of many common domestic and imported seafood products so we can help Canadian seafood lovers and businesses choose ocean-friendly seafood options. We use well-defined science-based sustainability criteria established by the *Monterey Bay Aquarium's* acclaimed *Seafood Watch®* program. Our assessments are available on our website at [SeaChoice.org](http://SeaChoice.org).



SeaChoice also produces handy wallet sized seafood guides for consumers that profile the sustainability ranking of the most common seafood items using a simple traffic light system.

Since our launch in 2006, our cards have been translated into French, Mandarin, and Cantonese. We've created a sustainable sushi guide to help all seafood lovers from coast to coast make ocean-friendly choices.

To date, nearly one million wallet guides have been circulated, and our free mobile apps allows users to access our ocean-friendly recommendations on the go.



**Best Choice** seafood is well managed, abundant, and caught or farmed in environmentally sustainable ways.



**Some Concerns** seafood should be consumed infrequently or when a green choice is not available. There are concerns with abundance, management, or impact on other marine life.



**Avoid** items from this list for now. They come from farmed or wild sources with a combination of critical problems - habitat damage, lethal impacts on other species, critically low populations or poor management.

## The Purpose of this Guide

The SeaChoice Business Guide is a resource designed to familiarize companies that buy and sell seafood with ways to implement a sustainable seafood policy that ensures healthy oceans, long-term seafood supply, and compliments their companies' business strategies. The guide helps answer several common questions and explains the essential elements of a successful sustainable seafood policy.

The partner profiles illustrated on in this guide demonstrate some examples of the work SeaChoice is doing with Canadian businesses. These proactive industry leaders are implementing sustainable seafood policies to achieve their goals through their partnership with SeaChoice.

SeaChoice offers this guide as a reference point for dialogue and future collaboration for companies that share our interest in supporting the long-term health of our ocean ecosystems and viability of seafood supply. Anyone can get involved and take meaningful steps along their sustainability path.

## Working With SeaChoice

### Incorporating seafood sustainability into your business

SeaChoice understands that retailers, distributors, producers, and restaurants operate in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive market. To be on the leading edge requires innovation, adaptation, and a willingness to take actions that can set your business apart from competitors. Over the last several years, consumers have been demanding 'green' products and are actively supporting businesses that adopt environmentally responsible practices.

Partnering with a solution-based coalition of environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can help your business achieve its goals in a more socially and environmentally responsible manner. NGOs can provide external perspectives and scientific expertise that can help support your goals.

Canadian consumers concerned with their own health and well-being are also increasingly seeking items produced with the health of the environment in mind; "organic" and "eco-friendly" labels are becoming more prominent in grocery aisles and on menus. In 2011, World Wildlife Fund study revealed that "91 per cent of Canadians feel that it is important that fish and other seafood sold in Canada comes from sustainable and non-overfished stocks."

**"91 per cent of Canadians feel that it is important that fish and other seafood on sale in Canada come from sustainable and non-overfished stocks."  
2011, WWF**



The growing sector of Eco-conscious consumers is expecting businesses to source ocean-friendly seafood. When a business publicly commits to a sustainable seafood policy, these customers will recognize these actions in sustainability leadership and will help support the commitment with their purchases.

## Working Towards Solutions

SeaChoice can help you develop and implement your Sustainable Seafood Policy.

Proactive businesses looking to implement a sustainable seafood policy will face exciting opportunities and some new challenges. Having partnered with several high-profile businesses, SeaChoice knows how to help you maximize your success while working to overcome the challenges.

The following pages outline what we view as key elements of a successful sustainable seafood policy. We've profiled a few of our business partners that are already achieving many of the goals that they have committed to. SeaChoice will work with your company to help develop a policy and help determine what first steps make the most sense for your business.



### Benefits

As your policy and procurement and sale of sustainable seafood progresses, SeaChoice will help you develop educational and promotional materials that highlight your sustainable seafood offerings and your company's efforts to support environmentally responsible fisheries and aquaculture practices.

SeaChoice business partners also benefit from having our support at select in-store events as well as featuring upcoming news on our website, social networks, and Canadian media.



### Moving towards a Greener Future

SeaChoice is working toward a future in which environmentally sustainable fisheries and aquaculture thrive at a level that supports the communities and people that depend on them. This sustainable seafood vision can be supported by sourcing environmentally responsible (SeaChoice "best choice") seafood and supporting policies and practices that will help sustain ocean health over the long term.

Ocean-friendly fisheries are those that target healthy populations, minimize habitat damage, have low levels of by-catch or discards of non-target species, and that are well managed.

Sustainable aquaculture are those that minimize the use of marine resources for feed, pose low risks to wild stocks through escapes or disease and parasite transfer, have low risk of pollution and other habitat effects, and are effectively managed.

To learn more about "best choice" seafood recommendations, visit [SeaChoice.org](http://SeaChoice.org).

## Implementing a Sustainable Seafood Policy 'The Common Vision'

The SeaChoice organisations are proud to be of founding members of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions ([solutionsforseafood.org](http://solutionsforseafood.org)). Formed in 2008, sixteen leading conservation organisations from North America partnered to pursue a 'Common Vision for Environmentally Sustainable Seafood' and work together as the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions.

The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions' 'Common Vision for Environmentally Sustainable Seafood' identifies six key areas where companies can demonstrate leadership and take action to ensure a sustainable seafood supply.

As a SeaChoice partner, you can be confident that your sustainable seafood policy is anchored in a larger framework of science and expertise that makes up the Conservation Alliance.

### Make a commitment



Creating a corporate policy on sustainable seafood shows an important commitment to action and provides essential guidance for company practices. Commit to implementing a policy that:

- ✓ supports your corporate sustainability values
- ✓ incorporates fisheries and aquaculture science into purchasing decisions by using SeaChoice rankings
- ✓ includes strategies that engage management, staff and customers in your efforts
- ✓ works with suppliers and policymakers to encourage improvements in fisheries and aquaculture to help create a more sustainable supply of seafood for our future.

### Collect Data

A greater understanding of your seafood products and where they come from enables companies to measure changes in the seafood supply, identify problems, and take action to improve supply over time. Specific information to track includes:

- ✓ common and scientific names of seafood
- ✓ country of origin
- ✓ wild stock or farm operator
- ✓ fishing gear or aquaculture production method used
- ✓ volume of product purchased
- ✓ SeaChoice environmental sustainability rankings



## Improve Procurement



Seafood companies at all levels of the supply chain have an important role to play in sourcing ocean-friendly seafood options. By shifting to sustainable seafood, you can help create a demand for products that are responsibly caught and harvested.

- ✓ Source and promote SeaChoice “best choice” options.
- ✓ Contact with SeaChoice for guidance on how to find ocean-friendly alternatives to “red listed” seafood.
- ✓ If purchasing seafood that does not meet sustainability criteria, source product from operators willing to improve their performance and demonstrate progress.

## Be Transparent

Being transparent about your actions taken to improve seafood sustainability is essential for securing and communicating achievements. To do this, you can make the following publicly available:

- ✓ Your company’s sustainable seafood policy
- ✓ An annual status report summarizing your achievements and planned actions
- ✓ Information relevant to sustainability that enables your customers to make informed choices
- ✓ Seafood labelling that clearly identifies species name, location, gear/ production method, and SeaChoice ranking



## Educate



Help educate customers, employees, and stakeholders along the seafood supply chain to help increase their awareness and understanding of seafood sustainability.

- ✓ Commit to training seafood sales staff about your ocean-friendly options so they can effectively help your customers make informed choices.
- ✓ Inform your suppliers, management, employees, and the public about your commitment to sustainable seafood and the milestones you achieve in moving forward.

## Support Reform

To achieve seafood sustainability, significant improvements in the environmental performance of fisheries and farming operations are required. Your support for policy and management reforms will help get us there. Policy support includes:

- ✓ Public access to fisheries data,
- ✓ Improved labelling for seafood products, and
- ✓ Rigorous, well-resourced monitoring and enforcement of domestic fisheries and aquaculture management.



## Businesses Making it Work



Across Canada several businesses have developed a public sustainable seafood policy as their commitment to ocean-friendly seafood. This important action is helping to raise awareness while having a direct influence on consumer preferences.

As the demand for sustainable seafood continues to grow, proactive purchasing decisions are encouraging concrete improvements in fisheries and aquaculture practices and management.

That's great news for seafood lovers and our oceans!

## Overwaitea Food Group



As warnings about global seafood supply started to emerge, the Overwaitea Food Group (OFG) began to investigate how we may be able to contribute to solutions.



Since our partnership was formed in June of 2009, several milestones on our journey to offer ocean friendly seafood options to Western Canadian families have been achieved. The implementation of a robust sustainable seafood policy, distribution of over 400,000 SeaChoice wallet guides, and becoming the first Canadian retailer to offer a land raised farmed salmon underlines our ongoing commitment to healthier oceans. While there is still work to be done, the Overwaitea Food Group continues to work closely with the SeaChoice team to make continual improvements to help ensure the long term supply of sustainable seafood options available in their stores.



## Canada Safeway



To ensure we continue to provide healthy seafood products for our customers today and into the future, Canada Safeway believes in the sustainable use of our precious ocean resources. As part of our corporate social responsibility, Canada Safeway partnered with SeaChoice in 2011 to implement our progressive sustainable seafood policy.

In line with the US partnership of Safeway Inc and non-profit FishWise, the core of Safeway's policy is our sustainable seafood commitment: by 2015, all fresh and frozen seafood will be sourced from sustainable and traceable sources, or be in a credible improvement project. To meet this goal, SeaChoice and Canada Safeway are engaging with our suppliers to assess and improve sustainable seafood procurement, as well as educate employees and customers about the environmental concerns associated with seafood.

## Federated Co-operatives Ltd.

Federated Co-operatives Limited began our partnership with SeaChoice in 2010 to help fulfill our commitment to sourcing sustainable seafood products for our customers. We recognize our role in helping ensure a sustainable future for the seafood we supply to our retail locations and our work towards healthier oceans with SeaChoice is a part of our “We Care” initiative. We have developed a sourcing policy that is focused on the long term sustainability of our seafood supply which in turn supports the overall health of our oceans.



With 245 independently operated retail locations, our goal is to offer ocean-friendly seafood products that are attractive to consumers and support healthier oceans. Since our partnership was formed we have achieved several milestones on our journey to offer ocean friendly seafood. We will continue to work with SeaChoice to identify more product options, provide educational material, and work with our suppliers to meet our objectives. We are happy to support SeaChoice to help make smart seafood decisions for today and tomorrow.



## Bento Sushi

At Bento Sushi we believe the very best food shouldn't just taste good, it should make you feel good, too. That's why our goal is to provide you with great tasting sushi in the most sustainable, and responsible manner possible.

Since 2009, we have been working with SeaChoice to use sustainable fish and seafood wherever possible. We've made great strides by using Alaskan Pollock, Albacore Tuna, and Icelandic Capelin Roe in our sushi. We love the oceans. They provide us, and you, with the bounty from which we create all of our delicious menu options.

Bento Sushi is Canada's largest sushi company, with over 900 chefs rolling up over 10 million sushi portions every year since 1996, nationwide.

## Seacore Seafood Inc.

Located in Woodbridge Ontario, Seacore Seafood is Ontario's largest full line importer, distributor, and custom processor of quality fresh and frozen seafood products. Our business is seafood, and we recognize our role in providing ocean friendly options to our customers.



Our partnership with SeaChoice has helped us better understand which products are more sustainable, but more importantly, helped us understand why. In addition to product recommendations, SeaChoice has provided us with a roadmap that allows us to continually improve the sustainability of the seafood we offer our customers. With several “Best Choice” options available, we're eager to continue our work with SeaChoice to offer you smart seafood choices for today and tomorrow.

## Frequently Asked Questions



### ***How does consumer interest in seafood for health reasons relate to environmental sustainability?***

The health benefits of eating seafood are widely known; however, consumers have limited their consumption when they are unsure if the seafood they are choosing was caught or farmed in a sustainable way. Seafood can be a healthy part of a well-balanced diet and by supplying your customers with the necessary information; they can purchase seafood that is both healthy for their family and the

### ***Are Canadian standards for seafood labelling enough to show what is sustainable?***

Unlike in the U.S. and the European Union, Canada's labelling regulations do not require seafood labels to identify the location, whether it is wild-caught or farmed or other important information that will help inform consumers of ocean-friendly choices. Because of the lack of labelling requirements, tracking this information at the retail level and staff knowledge are critical to help ensure your company can accurately provide sustainable choices and information for your customers.

### ***What about organic seafood?***

Organic standards for seafood do not necessarily equate to a sustainable product. Some organic standards for seafood allow the use of antibiotics, chemicals, the use of non-organic wild fishmeal and lack appropriate waste management.

At the time of this publication, a Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard is currently being drafted and coordinated by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB). Based on the two drafts of the proposed standards released by CGSB for public comment thus far, sustainability concerns still remain in regards to finfish aquaculture



***Are there suppliers or processors that specialize in sustainable seafood that I can work with?***

Yes! Many seafood businesses offer seafood items from the SeaChoice “Best Choice” list.

***FishChoice.com*** is an online sustainable seafood sourcing tool that connects retail, restaurant, and institutional seafood buyers to suppliers of sustainable seafood products.

Working with several recognized seafood conservation organizations that have science-based, credible sustainable seafood programs, FishChoice.com is an excellent resource to help businesses like yours discover many of the ocean-friendly seafood options your customers are asking for.



***I am interested in supporting sustainable seafood; how should I get started?***

Following the key elements in this guide is a great initial step to becoming more acquainted with sustainable seafood and the ways businesses can support environmentally responsible practices.

To learn more, please contact SeaChoice and we will work with you to explore the best options for your company.

## **Find out More!**

For more information about SeaChoice visit our website at ***SeaChoice.org*** or contact our National Manager at ***info@SeaChoice.org***.

To explore how to get your business involved contact our Corporate Business Relations Coordinator at ***corp.relations@SeaChoice.org***.





**SeaChoice.org**  
*for healthy oceans*

Member organizations:



**CPAWS**  
CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY



David  
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Healthy Oceans. Healthy Communities.



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