

## SEASONAL SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS TO ENHANCE YOUR MENU

There are excellent local seafood choices that are underappreciated in the restaurant industry. By choosing these seasonal products, you take pressure off stocks that are or have been over-fished, and avoid harvesting methods that are damaging to the environment and other marine species. This is also a great way to support local fishers and communities directly.

By making thoughtful and carefully considered seafood purchasing decisions, you can help our oceans and ensure that sustainable practices are awarded. As food leaders and culinary ambassadors, chefs can help create positive change in our fisheries while promoting freshness and quality. Many chefs know their farmers and we encourage them to get to know their fishers too.



**Local fishers jig squid in the summer season, using artisanal techniques.**



**Local mackerel and herring is available in the summer season, and can be procured at low cost.**



**Hand dug clams are available in the summer season, as well as dive-caught urchins.**



**Sustainably farmed oysters are available in the spring and fall, and sometimes in the winter depending on conditions.**



**Wild and sustainably farmed mussels are available year round (but are at their best in the early spring).**



**Lobster can be locally sourced when in season and provides an important source of income to Atlantic fishers.**

## RESOURCES:

### [ecologyaction/marine](http://ecologyaction/marine)

The Ecology Action Centre works to promote small scale, low impact fishing which supports Atlantic Canadian coastal communities.

### [seachoice.org](http://seachoice.org)

Canada's Seachoice program helps Canadian business and consumers take an active role in supporting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture at all levels of the seafood supply chain.

### [oceanwise.ca](http://oceanwise.ca)

The Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise program works with restaurants, markets, foodservices and suppliers to help them make ocean-friendly buying decisions.

## SUPPLIER CHECK LIST:

- **Where was the fish caught?**
- **How was it caught?**
- **Who caught it?**
- **When was it landed and how long was the boat out?**
- **Where was it processed?**
- **Are the fish tagged?**

(i.e. can my guests trace the catch by punching in a code on their phone)

For more information, contact EAC's Dave Adler at [dadler@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:dadler@ecologyaction.ca) or 902-442-0999.

<sup>1</sup>See "How We Fish Matters: Ecological Impacts of Canadian Fishing Gear", <http://www.howwefish.ca/>.

See also Seachoice recommendations: <http://www.seachoice.org/fish/find/?q=swordfish>  
<sup>2</sup><http://www.seachoice.org/fish/bluefin-tuna/>

<sup>3,5</sup>See "How We Fish Matters: Ecological Impacts of Canadian Fishing Gear", <http://www.howwefish.ca/>



On the Atlantic Canadian coast, we're fortunate to have access to a wide variety of seafood options. Many of these seafood choices are harvested locally, supporting the livelihoods of Atlantic Canadian fishers and they're of exceptional quality.

Unfortunately, there are also some fisheries in Atlantic Canada that have harmful effects on the populations of fish and fragile species found on the seafloor. Fortunately, sustainably caught or farmed alternatives are available in most cases.

Environmental leaders in the retail and restaurant industry can help support the marine environment and coastal communities if they choose wisely when purchasing fish and shellfish.



## GEAR TYPES USED TO CATCH SWORDFISH AND TUNA

### HARPOON

- no impacts on seafloor
- no bycatch

### PELAGIC LONGLINE

- no impact on seafloor
- high level of bycatch, including endangered sharks and turtles

### ROD AND REEL

- no impact on seafloor
- low level of bycatch

### SWORDFISH

Nova Scotia has a substantial fishery for swordfish. Most swordfish is caught using pelagic longlines, which consist of hundreds or even thousands of baited hooks which can be over 50 kilometers long, just below the surface of the sea. Pelagic longlines indiscriminately catch other species, including sharks and turtles, many of which are considered endangered or at risk of becoming so. Luckily, Nova Scotia is one of the last places in the world that still has a harpoon swordfish fishery. This ancient fishing technique takes place in the summer when swordfish bask on the surface. There is no bycatch, and the fish is the freshest swordfish available.<sup>1</sup>

### TUNA

There are many types of tuna found throughout the ocean and globally, most tuna species are under serious pressure due to decades of unregulated overfishing. Pacific bluefin tuna populations have declined by 96% and the Western population of Atlantic bluefin tuna by 45% since 1970s levels. Seachoice recommends avoiding bluefin altogether.<sup>2</sup> Smaller tuna species, caught by rod and reel such as albacore and big-eye are a more responsible choice.



### SALMON

There's a lot of low priced salmon available these days from Atlantic Canada, as open-pen salmon farms expand along our coast lines. However, these operations impact the health of marine and coastal environments through release of waste as well as the spreading of disease and parasites to wild fish populations. Beaches in the vicinity of salmon farms can also be contaminated. Instead of serving open net pen farmed Atlantic salmon, consider delicious **wild Pacific salmon** from healthy stocks or closed containment farmed Arctic char and Atlantic salmon. These are grown in land-based farms where they don't impact the ocean's health. While it makes sense to buy wild, local seafood in most cases, this unfortunately isn't the case with salmon.

### HADDOCK

Haddock is ubiquitous in Nova Scotia restaurants. But not all haddock is the same. The most common method for commercially harvesting haddock is bottom trawling or draggers that scrape along the seafloor and destroying important habitats for fish. This also leads to a lower quality, roughly handled product. It is possible to source fresh haddock of excellent quality that is also harvested with much lower impacts to the ocean floor.<sup>3</sup> It is important to source fresh haddock in the summer and fall as haddock spawn in the winter. At other times, choose frozen.

### BOTTOM GILLNET

- Low impact on seafloor
- Some bycatch issues

### BOTTOM LONGLINE

- low impact to seafloor
- non selective, problems with bycatch but catches much smaller than trawls
- used mostly by small-scale fishers

### COD

Maritimers love their cod, and it is popular both in its traditional salted version as well as in more modern dishes. The problem is that some of our cod stocks have declined by as much as 99%, and are considered endangered. If you can avoid serving cod, do so—and if you must have it, source it from local bottom longline fishers who only bring it up as incidental bycatch instead of targeting it. It is also possible to source cod from the artisanal handline and trap fisheries in Newfoundland.

### HALIBUT

Halibut is a special treat for customers because of its subtle flavour and texture. It has been difficult to get for the past two decades because there have been so few halibut in our waters. However, Atlantic halibut is one of the few species that has recently shown signs of recovery since groundfish collapsed in the 1990s. We're cautiously optimistic that, with moderate consumption and responsible management, the population will continue to rebuild and halibut remain a high value bottom longline catch for coastal communities.

### BOTTOM TRAWL

- high level of damage to seafloor
- separator grates to limit bycatch, but it is still a concern
- dominant method of fishing groundfish in Atlantic Canada

### SHRIMP/PRAWNS

Most of the shrimp served in restaurants are farmed in tropical regions and shipped to Canada. Shrimp farms are notorious for destroying mangrove swamps, which provide important habitat, act as nurseries for a huge number of species and protect communities from storm surges. However, there are local wild-caught shrimp available, which are a more sustainable option than the farmed version. If you want to go that extra mile, source your shrimp from a trap-caught fishery, where there is little or no bycatch, reduced fuel consumption as well as an extremely high quality product.

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### SHRIMP TRAP

- very low impact on seafloor
- bycatch levels lower than trawls
- currently available in Nova Scotia

### SCALLOPS

Scallops are a local delicacy, and a staple of most restaurants that serve seafood in Nova Scotia. While abundant in Atlantic waters, particularly in the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine, the most common harvest method (dredging) is very damaging to the seafloor and results in significant amounts of bycatch of other species. Look for farmed scallops and keep an eye out for wild dive caught scallops in the future.<sup>4</sup>

### DREDGE (AND HYDRAULIC DREDGE)

- very low impact to seafloor
- high level of bycatch

### CLAMS

Most wild clams in the Atlantic region are harvested through hydraulic dredging, which essentially involves liquefying the seabed that clams are buried in—this is a highly invasive fisheries method. For chowders and fry-ups, choose farmed clams or really do your bit for our oceans and buy hand dug or diver caught clams from a local artisanal fishery.<sup>5</sup>

### DIVE

- no bycatch
- low impact to seafloor
- EAC is working to develop a dive-caught scallop fishery

## GEAR TYPES USED TO CATCH HADDOCK, COD AND HALIBUT

## GEAR TYPES USED TO CATCH SHRIMP, SCALLOPS AND CLAMS