SeaChoice Submission to the CFIA Food Labelling Modernization Initiative

Engaging on Key Proposals to Modernize the Food Labelling System Phase III

Submitted by Colleen Turlo, on behalf of SeaChoice and its member organizations – David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre, Living Oceans Society

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Submission Contents

SeaChoice would like to thank the CFIA for accepting this submission, and express interest in remaining engaged in the Food Labelling Modernization Initiative process, especially while the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations are undergoing amendments and review.

In addition to our formal submission, we would like to request a meeting with the relevant CFIA representatives, to further discuss our comments and suggestions around how to improve seafood labelling in Canada.

SeaChoice Organizational Overview

SeaChoice is a Canadian collaborative conservation program of the David Suzuki Foundation, the Ecology Action Centre and Living Oceans Society.

SeaChoice's focus over the past decade has been to provide informative resources on seafood sustainability to both consumers and businesses. Launched in 2006, SeaChoice was created to help Canadian businesses and consumers take an active role in supporting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture at all levels of the seafood supply chain. Based on scientific assessments, SeaChoice has created easy-to-use tools that help Canadians make the best seafood choices.

SeaChoice is a member of the international Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions, and has worked closely with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's acclaimed Seafood Watch program. SeaChoice has also collaborated with its member organizations in selected Marine Stewardship Council and Aquaculture Stewardship Council certifications of Canadian fisheries and farming operations.

Having achieved significant progress over the past decade, particularly with our retail partners achieving their sustainable seafood procurement commitments, SeaChoice is in the process of pivoting into the next decade of work to improve the sustainability of seafood produced in, and imported into, Canada.

Moving forward, SeaChoice will be directing more resources into issues of transparency and traceability, verifying seafood labelling through DNA testing in Canadian markets, using market leverage to improve some of the least sustainable fisheries and aquaculture production, and providing retailers the tools and incentive necessary to create and improve their own sustainable seafood policies in-house.

SeaChoice is a national program with dedicated staff in Vancouver and Halifax. The SeaChoice program is formally hosted at the David Suzuki Foundation in Vancouver, British Columbia. Our member organizations represent between 5 and 99 employees, but we engaged just over **12,700 Canadians** to support our comments and submission for Phase III of the Food Labelling Modernization Initiative.

Rationale for Submission

Our main focus for this submission is on **fish and seafood labelling and traceability** throughout the supply chain, with an emphasis on labelling at the point of sale.

Consumers are become increasingly aware of, and interested in, the origins of their seafood, particularly as issues such as environmental sustainability, impacts on endangered species, toxin accumulations, incidents of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, quality assurances and human rights abuses are better understood. Reports of seafood fraud—where seafood is advertised as something it is not —are also further eroding consumer confidence. Additionally, the "eat local" movement has further increased the number of Canadians wanting to support more local, Canadian seafood producers. Many of these issues can be addressed, and at least partially solved, by requiring comprehensive product labelling and traceability, both of which increase transparency from harvest to plate.

In order for a consumer or a business to make an informed seafood choice, they must have a certain amount of information about the product they are purchasing. While working closely with the seafood supply chain through direct and indirect partnerships, SeaChoice has noticed a reoccurring issue as we try to assist businesses in procuring sustainable seafood, related to inconsistent data, poor labelling and questionable traceability of seafood.

After researching and releasing our 2016 report *Taking Stock: Sustainable Seafood in Canadian Markets* (see Appendix I for key results of the report), SeaChoice identified several priority areas where we could have the most significant impact on creating change on the water, and increasing the sustainability of Canadian fisheries and aquaculture operations. One of these newly identified areas of focus for SeaChoice moving forward was demanding better labelling and traceability within the seafood supply chain in Canada. Stronger, more detailed labelling can simplify some of the complexities that exist within the seafood supply chain around verifying product information, and allow for better analysis and traceability of the large volumes of seafood being produced, exported, and imported into Canada. Having a clearer picture of the sustainability of the seafood that remains in Canada, and where our exports end-up can help SeaChoice target the fisheries and aquaculture operations which are in most need of improvement.

The CFIAs Food Labelling and Modernization Initiative (FLMI), is an important opportunity to submit comments on what key data elements should be mandatory on seafood packaging and labels. These key data elements are necessary for both companies and consumers to make informed decisions about the seafood they support and purchase, as they can shed light on environmental and socio-economic sustainability. Other issues, such as health implications, Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) fishing and quality assurances can be addressed by including these key pieces of information as well.

A new SeaChoice report - *Canadians Eating in the Dark: A Report Card of International Seafood Labelling Requirements* (Appendix V) – compares Canada's seafood labelling

regulations to those of its two largest export markets, the European Union and the United States, and highlights the fact that seafood products sold within Canada are accompanied with less information than when sold abroad in these other jurisdictions. This is an opportunity for Canada to align its regulations with those of our major trade partners to facilitate smoother trade and business operations.

Approach

With this opportunity to contribute to new regulations in Canada through the FLMI process, SeaChoice engaged our larger network for support of our seafood labelling submission. We reached out to other NGOs that work in marine conservation, seafood consumers and the public for support.

Based on research from our latest report, *Canadians Eating in the Dark,* SeaChoice created a briefing document (Appendix II) outlining the seafood labelling regulations that require strengthening in Canada, and the practices of other jurisdictions with respect to seafood labels and packaging. Our suggestion is that Canada should, at a minimum, meet the standards of our trading partners. Next we hosted a "petition" (Appendix III) to better understand the level of concern amongst the public and to provide support for our suggestions for modernizing seafood labelling in Canada (signatures found in Appendix IV).

This submission is therefore informed by a **research report**, **a public petition**, and our **detailed comments**, found below.

SeaChoice's Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Canadian government should amend its labelling policy to include the following information on seafood products:

- Species' (Latin) scientific name
- Production method (wild or farmed)
- Harvest method (gear type or farming method)
- Geographic origin (region of catch or area of production)

More mandatory information on seafood labels and packaging is vital to protecting consumers from fraud and misrepresentation and ensures a more fair, truthful and equitable marketplace for retailers and producers alike.

As recommended in our report (Appendix V) we urge the CFIA to include the following information as mandatory requirements for labels and packaging of seafood sold in Canada: **the scientific name, production and harvest methods and geographic origin**. This information should be transparently available at all stages of the seafood supply chain – from producer to consumer – regardless if it is harvested domestically or imported. And with retailers selling two-thirds of seafood sold in Canada[1], labelling at the point-of-sale in retail venues is essential.

The current Canadian requirements for labelling seafood products intended for human consumption is insufficient. The mandatory requirements of listing only a common name and the country of origin for wholly imported food, or the place of last major processing (also called "country of origin") for altered foods, does little to inform buyers about environmental or social sustainability, potential health implications, quality assurance, or even if the species they are paying for is what they believe it is. It further obstructs Canadians from supporting local Canadian fisheries and seafood products.

It is important to note that greater details are necessary in order to *import* seafood into Canada. As part of the Fish Import Notification form, the following are required to be disclosed to the CFIA upon import: **common name, Taxonomic Serial Number** (which is associated with a specific scientific name on the Fish List), **production method (i.e. wild or farmed) and country of harvest**. In addition, importers need to provide the 'species risk group', as per the CFIA Fish List, which specifies whether the species is known to be a health risk (i.e. environmental contaminants, histamine production or marine toxins). Despite being required and collected by the CFIA at the point of importation, none of this key information is passed on to the next stages of the supply chain, and is certainly not presented to the end consumer.

The current fish labelling requirements are in many ways not consistent with the legal tenets of the regulations to not mislead consumers. Section 27 of the Fish Inspection Regulations states, "No person shall package any fish or mark or label any container of fish in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive". Omitting information on what a species actually is (its scientific name over its common name), and where it actually comes from (its geographic origin versus its "country

[1] Food for Thought, Strategic Information Services, Food & Drink Markets, 2007 Edition.

of origin"), is arguably misleading and not representative of truthful labelling. As accurately described in the Implementation Considerations from the Phase II stakeholder feedback "complete, accurate, consistent and truthful information on ingredients lists, nutrition, health and consumer values claims are needed."

Despite the lack of detail required on retail shelves in Canada, our major trade partners have more stringent import requirements to meet their labelling regulations.

> The **European Union** requires: common name, scientific name, harvest method (farmed or wild), geographic origin, method of catch (gear type) and place of last major processing.
>
> The **United States** requires: common name, method of harvest (farmed or wild), and place of last major processing (also called "country of origin").

Canadian aquaculturists, fishermen, processors and seafood exporting businesses need to ensure the necessary detailed label information accompanies their product in order to sell to both the EU and the US. This equates to 73 per cent of Canada's seafood exports being sold with greater product information abroad than required at home.

If Canada is already required to comply with labelling regulations for overseas markets, why not at home?

Recommendation 2:

Canadian food labelling policies should incorporate an onus on seafood supply chain actors to provide the necessary product information from source to customer to improve traceability.

SeaChoice recognizes that consumers have higher expectations about the accuracy of labels and product value claims, and prefers the government to regulate and monitor these claims instead of industry. Increased media attention around fraud and mislabelling of seafood has identified that our existing supply chain requires improved transparency and accountability to safeguard businesses and consumers.

As Canada's major seafood trading partners increase their **traceability requirements** for seafood imports, the need for better labelling and stronger traceability systems in Canada is quickly becoming a necessity for seafood trade.

Recent developments in trade agreements provide further incentive to upgrade Canada's labelling regulations, such as the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). As part of the negotiations, Canadian fisheries products are expected to meet Rules of Origin. Without domestic mandatory requirements that govern product origin, Canada's accountability to CETA is at risk.

Additional commitments to combatting IUU fishing overlap with the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing that entered into force in June 2016. Canada is expected to ratify the agreement in 2017.

Furthermore, the US Presidential Task Force on Combatting IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud's upcoming traceability program will place additional onus on Canadian fisheries and exporters, with Atlantic cod, swordfish and tuna amongst the priority species.

A robust labelling and traceability legislative framework in Canada would aid in closing opportunities for IUU products to enter the marketplace, align our regulations with those of our major trade partners, safeguard the economic integrity of our seafood products, and ensure that we meet existing and upcoming trade commitments.

Comments on Phase III Proposals

Response to Stream 1 – Modernizing Regulations

Section 1.4 - Origin of Imported Food

Proposal: *To avoid misleading dealer name and address with respect to origin of imported food –*

- *Require all wholly imported food products to include "Product of (naming the country)" information on the principal display surface or adjacent to the dealer information.*
    - We support this statement.
- *The country in which the food undergoes processing that changes its nature will be considered to be the country of origin for the purposes of labelling (last substantial transformation), consistent with Codex General Standard for Labelling of Prepackaged Foods.*
    - We agree that the place of last major processing should accompany a seafood product.
    - However, processing seafood – such as filleting, breading, canning or other value-added processes – should not preclude consumers from knowing the true geographic origin of that seafood product.
    - The geographic origin of the product should also be included on a label or packaging.
    - The term "Country of Origin" should only be used for wholly imported food products, and a separate term, such as "Country of Processing", should be used for products which undergo changes to its nature. This can ensure that consumers are not confused or misled about the true geographic origin of the seafood.
    - The European Union (EU) includes geographic origin as well as the place where substantial transformation or processing occurred (called identification mark).
        - For geographic origin of fish caught at sea, the EU requires the FAO area or sub-area of catch, accompanied with a simplification for the customer, such as a clearer name, a map or a pictogram.
        - For fish caught in freshwater, the EU requires the body of water and the EU country, or the non-EU country of origin to be listed.
        - For farmed fish, the EU requires the country of final rearing to be listed.
    - Consistency and accountability are important when listing the provenance of seafood products, especially for wild-caught seafood as geographic origin is crucial to understanding the impact of harvesting on the sustainability of wild stocks.

Section 1.6 – Ingredient List Improvements – Class Names

Proposal:

- *Once incorporated by reference, review the current specific class names used in Codex and the US, with the intent to harmonize and align class names used in Canada where possible, by amending, deleting or adding new class names.*
    - Comments in this section are specific to the CFIA Fish List and common names allowed for fish and seafood sold in Canada.
    - As there are thousands of species of fish and seafood sold in Canada, the label should clearly list the species scientific name, or a common name that represents just one species of fish.
    - The current fish list of common names often "hides" species behind one generic category which does not provide meaningful information to the consumers.
    - There are "common names" that can be used for a species whose populations are healthy and well managed, but also for a species that is threatened or endangered

(e.g., over 100 *Sebastes spp*. can be listed simply as "rockfish", over 100 crab species can be listed simply as "crab", 63 species of anchovy can be listed as "anchovy")
- Acceptable common names can also come from a range of guidance documents, and therefore is not consistent, clear, and uniform, but rather can be chosen subjectively. (Guidance documents include the CFIA fish list, Fish Inspection Regulations, the Food and Drug Regulations, other legislation, or how it is generally known).
- Listing a species by its scientific name (or a common name that only represents one species) can avoid subjectivity in listing seafood that may have common names that vary between languages or regional preferences.

- Identifying the harvest method for fish and seafood may also fit into the category of class names, by listing whether the species is "wild" or "farmed".
- The United States and the European Union include harvest method as a mandatory labelling requirement for seafood.

Section 1.8 – Streamlining and Removing Unnecessary Regulations

Proposal:
- *To maintain commodity-specific requirements in regulations only when these are needed for food safety and health, to align with international standards, or to prevent fraud.*
- *To deregulate all others unless industry or consumers request that they be maintained.*

Seafood is a unique commodity that the government should ensure aligns with international standards (primarily those of our major trade partners), and is labelled accurately domestically, and when imported, to avoid incidences of fraud.

Improvements in labelling requirements in other jurisdictions have been driven, in part, by the results of genetic testing of seafood. For example, genetic testing of fish in EU and US seafood markets has exposed extensive fraud, where seafood labelled as one type of fish is in fact an entirely different species. Following this testing, stricter labelling regulations and governance have been implemented in the EU with a resulting reduction in instances of mislabelled seafood. Genetic surveys in Canada[2] have also revealed seafood mislabelling as a serious concern, yet so far no improvements to seafood labelling have been made.

As a result of widespread media coverage of human rights violations in Thai shrimp fisheries, the US established the Presidential Task Force on Combatting IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud. In March, 2015 the task force published an action plan with 15 recommendations, including two that support a traceability program to "track seafood from point of harvest to entry into U.S. commerce." The National Ocean Council Committee on IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud (NOC Committee) has identified 16 priority species, representing approximately 40 per cent of seafood by value imported to the US for the first phase of the program.

Canada should establish its own system, and align it with the EU and US supply chain transparency and traceability initiatives.

[2] Hanner, R, Becker, S, Ivanova, NV, & Steinke, D 2011 FISH-BOL and seafood identification: geographically dispersed case studies reveal systemic market substitution across Canada. Mitochondrial DNA, vol. 22 suppl 1, pp. 106-122.

Response to Stream 2 – New Approach to Truthful and Not Misleading Food Labelling

Proposed Model

The CFIA is proposing a realignment of roles and responsibilities that reflect the legal and ethical responsibility of industry to ensure that claims are truthful and not misleading, the important role of consumers to seek information and express their own views on claims, and the role of government to adopt risk-based enforcement of rules related to food safety and fraud.

Industry:

- *Industry is responsible and accountable to ensure compliance with Canada's regulations, including ensuring that labels are not false or misleading to consumers.*
    - We support this.
- *Industry would be expected to apply due diligence and appropriate processes to develop label claims, be able to substantiate these claims, and proactively make available to consumers the meaning of claims on the label, on a website or through another readily accessible method.*
    - We support this.
- *Industry would be required to keep records of all complaints from consumers and any action taken in response as part of their preventive control plan, and answer inquiries from consumers and others. The SFCR will require the recording and monitoring of complaints.*
    - We support this.

Industry associations could play a key role in providing labelling advice and support to their members.

Consumers:

- *Consumers would be encouraged to take an active role in seeking information about a company's claim by contacting the company directly. Proposed regulatory requirements for company contact information on labels will support this approach.*
    - We support this.
- *Consumers will be encouraged to make complaints directly to companies if they have a concern.*
    - We support this.
- *Consumers could also advise the CFIA when they have a concern about misleading labelling for which they feel that the company has not provided a sufficient response. The CFIA would track such complaints and investigate, as appropriate (e.g. when multiple complaints received).*
    - We support this.

Government:

- *CFIA will review complaint records and process controls employed by a company for developing consumer value type of claims as part of inspections.*
    - We support this.
- *CFIA will investigate further and take enforcement action, as appropriate, when there is evidence that products are falsely labelled.*
    - We support this.
- *CFIA will develop guidance, checklists and model systems for companies on how to develop truthful and not misleading claims, such as engaging with stakeholders prior to using a claim.*
    - We support this.

- *CFIA would target inspection resources to areas of highest risk, including economically motivated adulteration of food and fraud.*
    - We support this.
    - Certain species of seafood are at higher risk of fraud than others.
    - Targeting inspections of those high-risk species which are more commonly mislabeled, or those more likely to be from an Illegal, Unreported or Unregulated (IUU) fishery, or to have human rights abuses in their supply chain would be a positive first step in verifying seafood entering the Canadian marketplace.
    - Traceability and transparency are important components of being able to identify seafood that is at higher risk of fraud.

The SmartLabel™ tool is an initiative that SeaChoice would support, if adding all of the product information that we are recommending is too burdensome for the business or company to include on their label. Giving consumers access to information about their seafood, either in print, or digitally through mobile scanning or "QR Code" technology promotes transparency, and allows consumers to confidently buy seafood that supports the elements they value.

Model for a Risk-Based Food Labelling System

Proper labelling and traceability of seafood sold in Canada falls under the "shared space" category of government oversight, government and others educate – e.g. industry and health associations. Due to reasons of economically motivated fraud, health concerns, quality assurances, environmental and socio-economic sustainability, risk of human rights abuses within the supply chain, or IUU fishing (as well as trade implications), seafood falls under a medium-to-high risk relating to false claims and preventative health attributes (and not as a lower risk as simply a consumer value claim).

Appendices

I. **Taking Stock Key Results**

II. Petition Briefing Document

III. Petition Landing Page

IV. Petition Signatories

V. SeaChoice Labelling Report

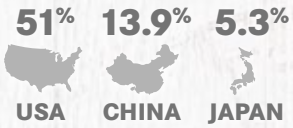
TAKING STOCK

HOW SUSTAINABLE IS CANADA'S SEAFOOD?

For the first time in Canada, SeaChoice has released a report to summarize Canadian seafood consumption and trade statistics, while assessing the sustainability of this seafood. Below are some key findings from the report, *Taking Stock: Sustainable Seafood in Canadian Markets*.

Canada is the 7th largest seafood exporter (as of 2014).

The top three countries exported to are:



Canada's **seafood exports** are generally **more sustainable** than the seafood we import. **Imported seafood is less sustainable** and often unrankable due to poor traceability.

In the Canadian marketplace, **only 11%** of seafood is ranked "**Best Choice**."

The **least sustainable seafood**, by far, produced in Canada is **farmed open-net pen Atlantic salmon**.

followed by **Atlantic cod**

and **Atlantic Hake**

Consumers should avoid **the top three red-ranked seafood**

skipjack tuna caught with fishing aggregating devices (FADs).

conventional **farmed tropical shrimp**

farmed open-net pen **Atlantic salmon**

Almost one-third of the seafood imported to Canada **cannot be ranked at all** mainly because this seafood is not traceable and poorly labelled.

SAFEWAY · CO-OP · BUY-LOW FOODS

SeaChoice retail partners source a higher percentage of sustainably ranked seafood than other retailers.

SeaChoice.org for healthy oceans

To learn more about the findings and recommendations from this report, visit www.seachoice.org/taking_stock/

OTHER KEY RESULTS:

- Sixteen per cent of all seafood (by volume) produced in Canada is ranked green (Best Choice), 61 per cent is ranked yellow (Some Concerns), Nine per cent is red (Avoid) and 14 per cent is unranked.
- Canada assesses 48 per cent of its fish stocks to be "healthy", a significantly different finding from this analysis.
- Approximately 80 per cent (by value) and 67 per cent (by volume) of Canadian wild-caught fisheries are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and have conditions in place to improve sustainability.
- Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certifications are growing on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, with five farms certified and seven within the certification process as of April 2016.

Fishery and aquaculture operations in Canada are important contributors to the ecological, economic, social and cultural fabric of Canada. To ensure continued or increased supply of seafood for domestic consumption and export, exploitation and production of these foods must be carried out in a manner that does not degrade their ecosystems. Canada also has a responsibility to ensure products it imports do not contribute to ecosystem degradation elsewhere and are obtained in ways that are respectful of human rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **To improve seafood sustainability tracking in Canada and the effectiveness of market-based approaches:**

   - Canada should require government agencies to improve seafood labelling and reporting of fisheries and aquaculture products by requiring species-level identifications.

   - ENGOs assisting with sustainable seafood procurements should adopt a shared data gathering tool to track program effectiveness.

2. **To eliminate red-ranked seafood and increase availability of green-ranked seafood as well as address human rights abuses in seafood production:**

   - Canadian retailers, food-service companies and restaurants should continue to avoid buying red-ranked seafood.

   - Canada should support traceability requirements as a part of sustainability assessments and examine human rights abuses in the seafood supply chain.

   - Focus should be on improving practices or restricting imports from red-ranked fisheries within and outside of Canada.

3. **To ensure that eco-certification programs are credible, aligned with Canadian law and policy and result in improved fisheries sustainability, including impacts on target species and impacts of fishing on the ecosystem, we recommend:**

   - Canadian fisheries certified by the MSC meet conditions within a reasonable timeframe, with MSC conditions that are consistent with Canadian laws and policies relating to sustainable fisheries and marine biodiversity protection, and with a particular focus on species assessed by COSEWIC and considered at risk.

   - ASC certifications, particularly with reference to the *Salmon Standard*,[1] should not undermine wild salmon management and must uphold a high standard for disease and pathogen control.

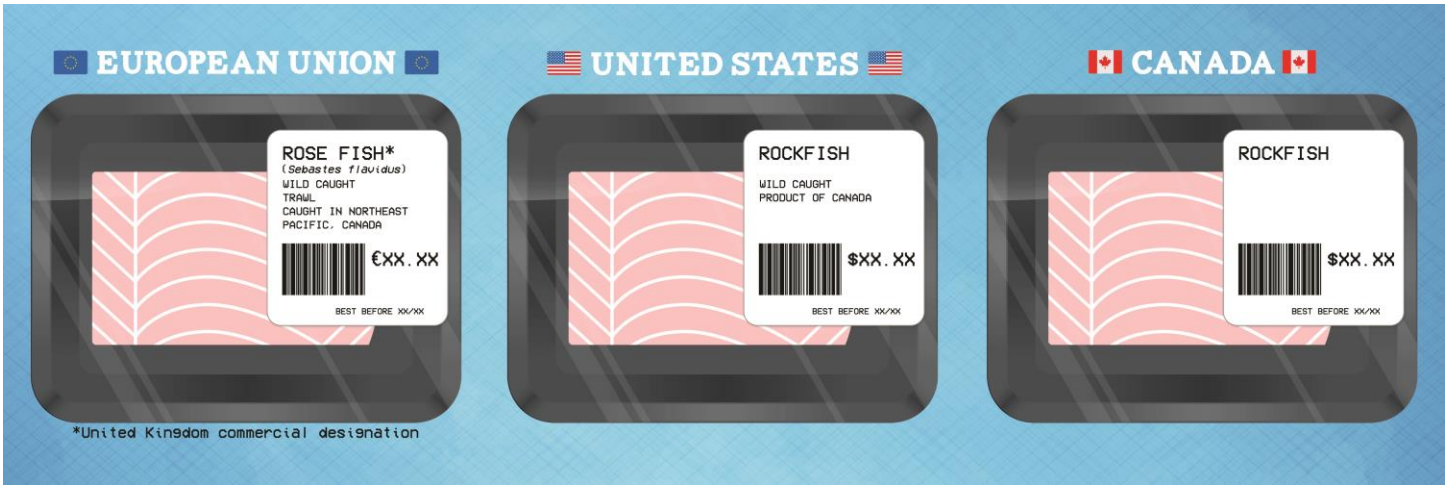
1 Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). (2012). Version 1.0 Salmon Standard. Accessed March 2016: http://www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASC%20Salmon%20Standard_v1.0.pdf

David Suzuki Foundation
SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

Ecology Action Centre

LIVING OCEANS

CPAWS
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society



ARE YOU EATING SEAFOOD IN THE DARK?

What's the Issue?

Have you ever bought seafood and wondered what fish you're actually buying? According to Canadian guidelines, a package labeled as "rockfish" could be one of more than 100 possible species, some of which are **endangered** and others which are **sustainably caught**.

Canadians deserve to know more about their seafood.

Other countries have more stringent requirements, so why don't we? It is the government's responsibility to make sure that labels and packages containing fish and seafood products are truthful, and tell us what we need to know about the seafood we are buying.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is reviewing its practices and asking Canadians for input on food labelling.

We need your voice!

SeaChoice.org
for healthy oceans

Do you care about:

Knowing what you're eating?

Your Health?

Sustainability?

Canada's Competitive Economy?

Traceability?

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Click **HERE** to tell CFIA that you want more information on your seafood labels.

CANADIANS DEMAND BETTER SEAFOOD LABELLING

Digging Deeper

Canadian regulations on fish and seafood labelling state that packages and labels must not be misleading or deceptive[1]. But while there are hundreds of fish and seafood species, caught or farmed in different ways, coming from different countries, being sold in Canada – the only fixed requirement for seafood labelling in Canada is that it lists a "common name" on the packaging (which often times isn't even that common!).

This isn't enough!

Knowing a product's scientific name, geographic origin, production method, and gear type or farming method are important factors that play into the product's environmental and socio-economic sustainability. This information should follow that product from source to sale. Other countries have more information on Canadian products in *their* markets, so why are *we* eating in the dark?

Recommendation for Seafood Labelling

The Canadian government needs to include more mandatory information on food labels so that businesses and consumers can make informed decisions and be safeguarded against fraud and mislabelling. Whether choosing food for **environmental sustainability** or **health** reasons, **supporting local fishers** and **fish farmers**, or simply **wanting to know what's in a package**, having additional information about seafood can help you make decisions with more confidence.

It is imperative that seafood labelling contain the following information:

Geographic Origin[2] - The location of catch or the location of the aquaculture operation should be clear to consumers. Canadian seafood exported for processing and then re-imported is currently labelled as a product from the export country (called "Country of Origin"), even though it was caught or farmed in Canada. This can be misleading as each country and each body of water has different sustainability, and quality control practices.

Scientific Name[3] - The use of a species scientific name ensures greater clarity. Common names apply to different species and can vary from region to region and language to language. The common name "rockfish", for example, is an accepted name for more than *100 different species*. Also, the number of acceptable common names on the French CFIA Fish List is different than the English list[4].

Production Method (Farmed or Wild)[5] - Both the U.S. and the E.U. differentiate between wild-caught and farmed seafood. This simple piece of information can have health and sustainability implications.

Gear Type or Farming Method - The gear type for wild caught seafood can have different impacts on the ocean floor and on other species accidentally caught in the gear. For farm-raised fish, different farming methods can have very different impacts on the surrounding environment and the native species that live there.

CANADIANS DEMAND BETTER SEAFOOD LABELLING

Recommendation Continued

If seafood labelling included these four additions (either directly or via mobile scanning or "Quick Response" (QR) code[6]), it would be easier to trace products throughout the supply chain, ensuring that fraudulent or unsafe foods are identified more rapidly and their distributors held accountable[7]. With complete, accurate, consistent and truthful information, Canadians will be more confident in the foods they purchase and consume.

Incorporating this information on labels will further align our domestic regulations with our major trading partners, namely the United States and the European Union. Having the same requirements for imports, exports and domestic products will help to **facilitate smoother sale and trade operations for Canadian businesses**.

Lend Your Voice

Do you want the Canadian government to shed some light on the seafood that we are eating? **Demand better mandatory labelling of fish and seafood in Canada by filling in our petition.** A list of signatories will be submitted to the CFIA as stakeholder comments for the Food Labelling and Modernization Initiative consultation process.

CLICK HERE TO VIEW AND SIGN THE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR BETTER SEAFOOD LABELLING IN CANADA

SeaChoice.org
for healthy oceans

[1] Section 27, Fish Inspection Regulations; Section 5(1), Food and Drug Act; 7(1), Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.
[2] In response to the CFIA Food Labelling Modernization Initiative, section 1.4 - Origin of Imported Food
[3] In response to the CFIA FLMI, section 1.7(b), Modified Standardized Common Name
[4] For example, on the CFIA Fish List, Sebastes capensis in English has 6 common names, but in French it has 2 common names listed.
[5] In response to the CFIA FLMI, section 1.7(b), Modified Standardized Common Name
[6] The CFIA has already identified the SmartScanTM initiative as a possible option.
[7] In response to the CFIA Food Labelling Modernization Initiative, section 2: New Approach for Truthful and Not Misleading Food Labelling

Demand better seafood labelling

(Example of good labelling)

Have you bought seafood and wondered what fish you're buying?

According to Canadian guidelines, a package with the "rockfish" label could contain one of more than 100 species, some of which are endangered and others sustainably caught. Canadians deserve to know more about their seafood.

Other countries have more stringent requirements, so why don't we? The federal government is responsible for making sure labels and packages containing fish and seafood products are truthful, and tell us what we need to know about the seafood we're buying.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is reviewing its practices and asking Canadians for input on food labelling.

We need your voice! Sign our petition before it closes on March 7, 2017.

You can read more on the SeaChoice website.

We will submit a list of signatories to the CFIA as stakeholder comments for the Food Labelling and Modernization Initiative consultation process. Sign the petition before March 7, 2017, to have your voice heard.

By signing, you agree with the following statement:

"I want the Canadian government to implement better mandatory requirements for fish and seafood labelling.

The Canadian government must include information on labels so businesses and consumers can make informed decisions and be safeguarded against fraud and mislabelling.

The only consistent requirement for seafood sold in Canada is that it lists a common name on the packaging or label. Seafood packaging also needs to list the location of catch or the aquaculture operation; the scientific name of the species (not just common names that can be misinterpreted); the production method (i.e., whether it's farmed or wild); and the gear type or farming method.

If seafood labelling included these four additions (either directly or via mobile scanning or "Quick Response" code), it would be easier to trace products throughout the supply chain, ensuring that fraudulent or unsafe foods are identified more rapidly and their

Sign the petition:

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Postal Code *

☑ YES - I would like to receive email from the David Suzuki Foundation! (You may unsubscribe at any time.)

Sign the petition now!

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distributors held accountable. With complete, accurate, consistent and truthful information, I will be more confident in the foods I purchase and consume. Please make these changes for the benefit of consumers, businesses and sustainability practices in Canada."

We will submit a list of signatories to the CFIA as stakeholder comments for the Food Labelling and Modernization Initiative consultation process. Sign the petition before March 7, 2017, to have your voice heard.

So far 12870 people have signed. Let's get to 15000!

Appendix III - Petition Signatories

SeaChoice collected and retains the detailed list of signatories for the seafood labelling petition displayed in Appendix II, which can be made available to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency if requested. SeaChoice requested that first name, last name, email and postal code be recorded for signatures.

Below is the regional breakdown of the signatures received supporting our petition for better seafood labelling in Canada.

Alberta – 863

British Columbia – 3,642

Manitoba – 344

New Brunswick – 200

Newfoundland – 91

Nova Scotia – 688

Northwest Territories and Nunavut – 20

Ontario – 5,057

Prince Edward Island – 57

Québec – 1,120

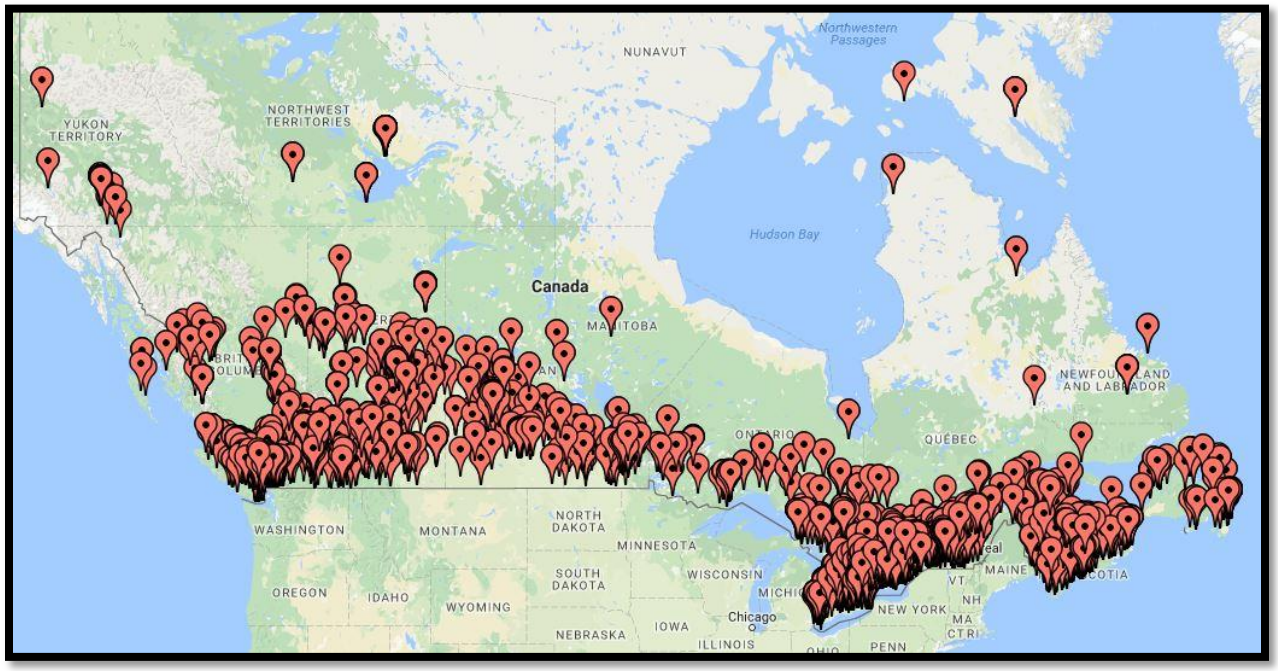
Saskatchewan – 239

Yukon – 40

Other Regions or Postal Codes Not Specified – 344

Total Number of signatories: 12,705

Geographical Representation of Petition Signatories via Postal Codes



CANADIANS EATING IN THE DARK:

A REPORT CARD OF INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

Kelly Roebuck, Colleen Turlo, Susanna D. Fuller, Scott Wallace

SeaChoice.org
for healthy oceans

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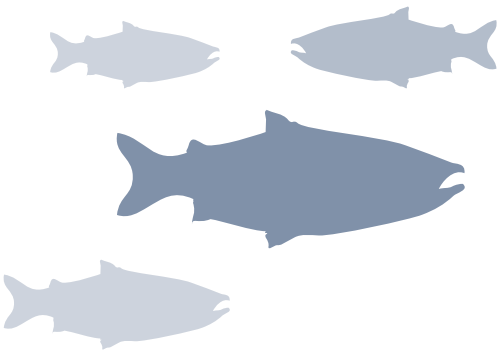
TABLE OF CONTENTS



CITATION:

Roebuck, K., Turlo, C., Fuller, S.D., Wallace, S. *Canadian's Eating in the Dark: A Report Card of International Seafood Labelling Requirements*. SeaChoice, March 2017. 24p.

Report can be dowloaded at:
labelmyseafood.ca

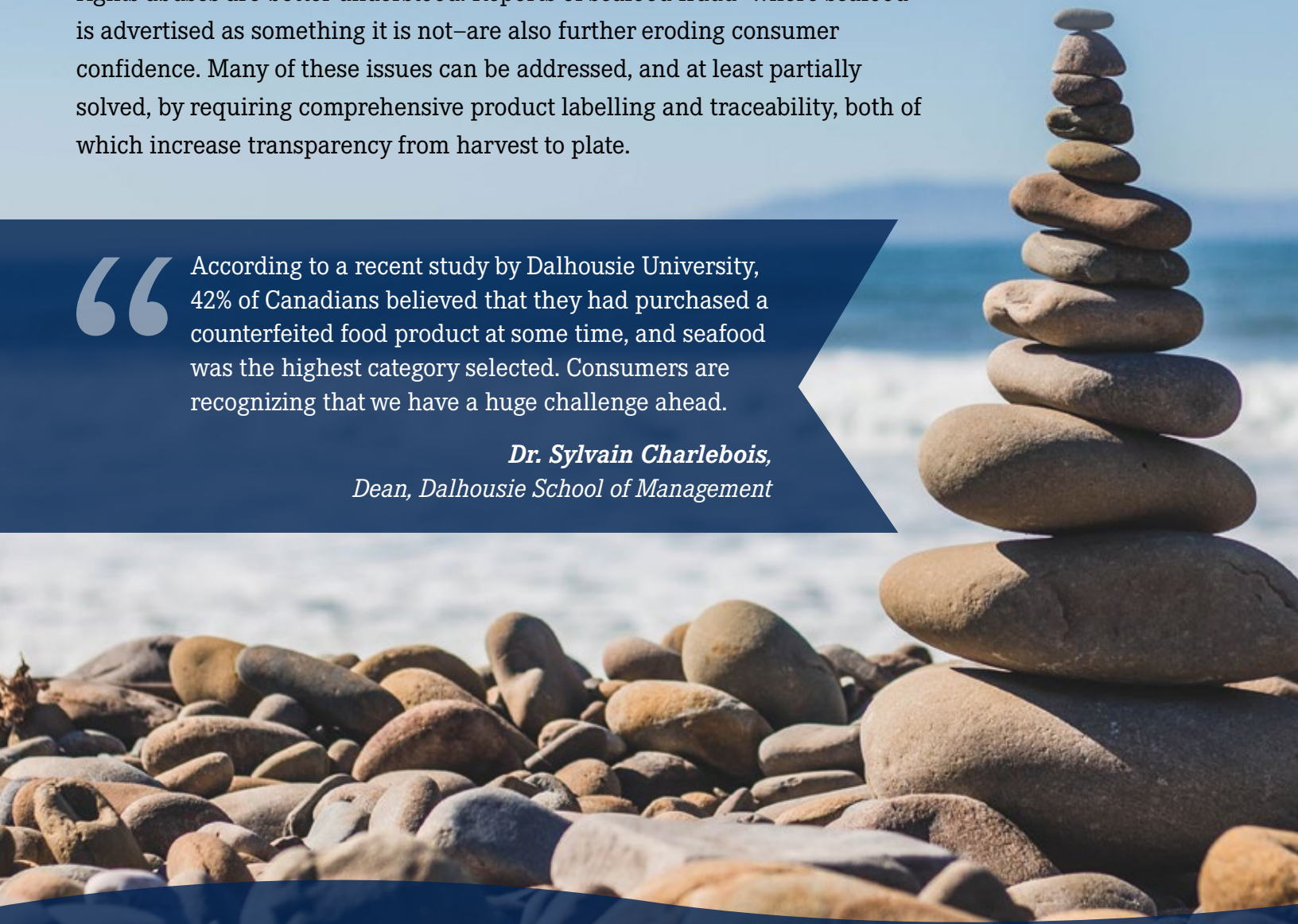
> "The fishing industry supports better seafood labelling because we have made significant investments in sustainable fishing and want retailers and consumers to know what they are buying.
>
> ***Brian Mose**, 5th generation fisherman, Executive Director of the Deep Sea Trawlers Association*

INTRODUCTION

Seafood is an important part of Canada's economy and culture, particularly in coastal areas. The origin of Canada's seafood tells much of the nation's history–from cod on the East Coast, to salmon on the West Coast, to char in the Arctic. Each year, about one million tonnes[1] of fish and shellfish are caught or farmed in Canada, with nearly 75 per cent then exported around the globe.[2] While Canada exports seafood like lobster, haddock, shrimp, rockfish and both wild and farmed salmon, an approximately equal volume of seafood such as tuna, shrimp and salmon is imported.[3] As a result, Canadian consumers are faced with diverse seafood choices from both domestic and international origins.

Consumers are become increasingly aware of, and interested in, the origins of their seafood, particularly as issues such as environmental sustainability, impacts on endangered species, toxin accumulations, incidents of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, quality assurances and human rights abuses are better understood. Reports of seafood fraud–where seafood is advertised as something it is not–are also further eroding consumer confidence. Many of these issues can be addressed, and at least partially solved, by requiring comprehensive product labelling and traceability, both of which increase transparency from harvest to plate.

> According to a recent study by Dalhousie University, 42% of Canadians believed that they had purchased a counterfeited food product at some time, and seafood was the highest category selected. Consumers are recognizing that we have a huge challenge ahead.
>
> ***Dr. Sylvain Charlebois,***
> *Dean, Dalhousie School of Management*



Canada Scores an "F" for seafood labelling regulations.

SEAFOOD LABELLING REGULATIONS REPORT CARD

HOW DOES CANADA COMPARE?

Seafood labelling regulations should require, at a minimum: the scientific name, production and harvest methods and geographic origin of a seafood product.

This information should be available at all stages of the supply chain–from producer to consumer. With retailers selling two-thirds of seafood sold in Canada,[4] labelling at the point-of-sale in retail venues is essential. To assess the adequacy of Canada's seafood labelling regulations, SeaChoice compared Canadian regulatory requirements for seafood labelling to two of Canada's major seafood trade partners:[5] the European Union (EU) and the United States (US).[a]

FIGURE 1. Seafood Labelling Report Card
Comparison of Seafood Labelling Regulatory Requirements in the European Union (EU), United States (US) and Canada across six key elements of comprehensive labelling.

EUROPEAN UNION

Policy: Common Organisation of the Markets (2014)

Responsible Department: Council of the European Union and Member States

UNITED STATES

Policy: Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 with the following amendments: The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act (2002); the Food, Conservation and Energy Act (2008); Consolidated Appropriations Act (2016)

Responsible Department: United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service

CANADA

Policy: Food and Drug Act, Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, Fish Inspection Act (1985)

Responsible Department: Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada

REPORT CARD

Basic Elements of Seafood Labelling

	EU	US	Canada
Common Name	✓	✓	✓
Scientific Name	✓	✗	✗
Production Method (Farmed or Wild)	✓*	✓	✗
Harvest Method	✓**	✗	✗
Geographic Origin	✓	✗	✗
Country of Last Major Transformation/Processing***	✓	✓	✓
GRADE	A	D	F

Scoring: A=above 5; B=5; C=4; D=3; F=2 or lower

*Labelled under the following designations: 'farmed' or 'caught'.

**Depicts harvest method for wild-caught fisheries, but not for farmed seafood: a ½ score is awarded.

***Labelled as "Identification mark" in the EU and "Country of Origin" in the US and Canada.

[a]Canada's top major export trade partners in 2015: US (64%); China (11%) and EU (10%). Only the US and EU were used for comparison in this report.

Of the six requirements for well-labelled seafood, Canada's regulations only require two: the common name and the country of final processing. While US regulations are similar to those in Canada, the production method is also required. The EU regulations require all elements of good seafood labelling, with the exception of specificity on the harvest method for farmed products. The differences between the three sets of regulations are perhaps most striking when comparing a typical label found within a retailer's fresh seafood counter.

FIGURE 2. One Fish: Three Labels
An example of labels depicting mandatory requirements for Pacific yellowtail rockfish sold in EU, US and Canadian stores.

EU LEADS THE WAY IN SEAFOOD LABELLING WHILE CANADA LAGS BEHIND

The comprehensive regulations for seafood labelling in the EU allow seafood buyers to know the species of seafood, where it was caught or farmed, and what fishing gear was used.[6] The EU Common Organisation of the Markets also places onus on the supply chain, requiring that the necessary catch documentation associated with the seafood product remain with it throughout the entire supply chain. There are strict penalties to further deter non-compliance.[7] This level of transparency provides businesses with greater assurances on products and their origins. In turn, this allows them to more easily determine: whether they are meeting corporate sustainable seafood policies, whether they are sourcing from IUU fisheries or supporting human rights abuses and whether they are receiving a product of lesser value than that purchased.

Introduced into US law via amendment to the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, the *Country of Origin Labelling* (COOL) regulation requires most US retailers to provide the "country of origin" and production method for all fish and shellfish.[8] Suppliers are required to make these two pieces of information available to their buyers. A significant shortcoming of the regulation, however, is the confusion caused by allowing the last place of processing to be labelled as the "country of origin" instead of its true *geographic* origin (i.e. where the seafood was originally caught or farmed). The confusion between *geographic* origin and "country of origin" exists as well in Canadian regulations, as noted below. The COOL regulations also lack requirements for detailed information such as species name and catch or harvest type.

In Canada, a combination of regulations from Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada form a minimalist approach to seafood labelling. The only two requirements for Canadian seafood are that all seafood produced in or imported into Canada be labelled with a common name (the CFIA provides a suggested list of appropriate common names),[9] and that imported seafood displays a "country of origin" label.[10] The CFIA-approved fish list of common names contains generic names, with one name applying to a variety of different species. Similarly, "country of origin" is actually the country of the last major transformation or processing, not where the fish was caught or farmed. Collectively, these two requirements misinform consumers by not including the data needed to verify the species and origin of the product.

MISLEADING COMMON NAME LABELLING IN CANADA

A Deeper Dive

In addition to the already misleading CFIA fish list of common names, a species could also be labelled with a common name listed in the Fish Inspection Regulations, the Food and Drug Regulations, other legislation, or if not listed in any legislation, a name by which it is "generally known".[11] Thus, even the common name can come from a variety of places and be chosen subjectively.

Furthermore, as a seafood product travels through the supply chain, the common name can also change at each exchange until the point of sale.

Maintaining a scientific name along the supply chain should be required for product verification. Currently, only the EU requires scientific names be included.

MISLEADING COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING IN CANADA

A Deeper Dive

To demonstrate the shortcomings of Canada's regulations, consider a fish caught in the Gulf of St. Lawrence by a Canadian fishing vessel. That fish may be exported to China for processing to produce fillets, which are then imported back into Canada. In this scenario, the seafood returning to Canada would be labelled as a "Product of China" (Note: this shortcoming is also found in US Country of Origin Labelling regulations).

Requiring *geographic origin* to be included can eliminate this issue of misrepresentation of the species' true origin and allow the label to differentiate between bodies of water (or FAO regions as occurs in the EU). For example, a product of the US could be labelled as coming from the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico or an inland lake or river, providing key information to determine the sustainability of the species.

ONE COMMON NAME = MANY SPECIES

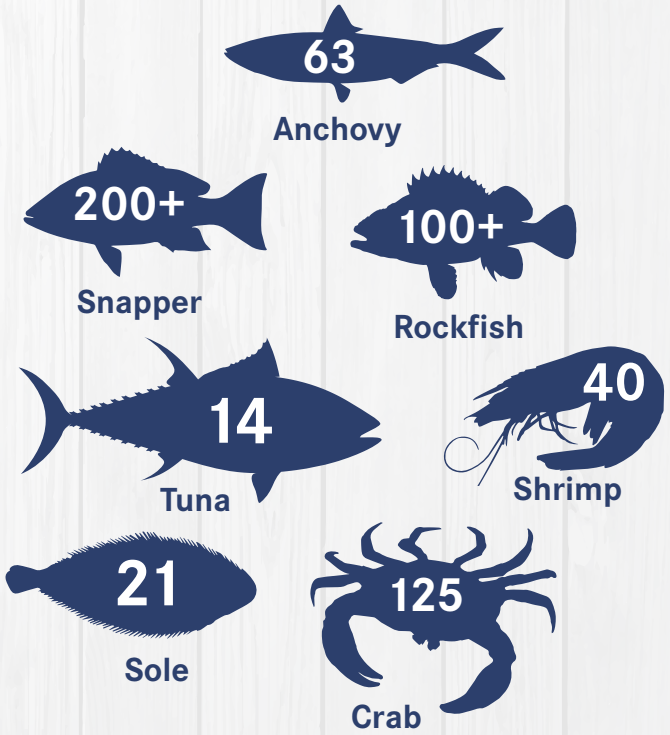


FIGURE 3. The CFIA Fish List allows for the lumping of many different species under one common name.

It is interesting to note however, that greater details are necessary in order to *import* seafood into Canada. As part of its Fish Import Notification form, the following are required to be disclosed to the CFIA upon import: common name, Taxonomic Serial Number (TSN), production method (i.e. wild or farmed) and country of harvest. The TSN is associated with a scientific name within the CFIA Fish List.[12] In addition, importers need to provide the 'species risk group', as per the CFIA Fish List, which specifies whether the species is known to be a health risk (i.e. environmental contaminants, histamine production or marine toxins). Unfortunately, despite being required and collected by the CFIA at the point of importation, none of this key information is passed on to the next stages of the supply chain, and is certainly not presented to the end consumer.

Consequently, in Canada, there is insufficient information accompanying fish and seafood products intended for human consumption, leaving businesses and consumers in the dark about what they are purchasing. The mandated labelling information–limited to a common name and the country of last major processing[b]–does little to inform buyers about environmental or social sustainability, potential health implications, quality assurance, or even if the species they are paying for is what they believe it is.

Fish labelling requirements are in many ways not consistent with the legal tenets of Canadian regulations to not mislead consumers. Section 27 of the Fish Inspection Regulations states, "No person shall package any fish or mark or label any container of fish in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive".[13] Omitting information on what a species actually is, and where it comes from, could arguably be deemed misleading and not representative of truthful labelling.

Despite the lack of detail required on retail shelves in Canada, major trade partners, principally the EU, have stringent import requirements to meet their labelling regulations. Canadian aquaculturists, fishermen, processors and seafood exporting businesses need to ensure the necessary detailed label information accompanies their product in order to sell to both the EU and the US. This equates to 73 per cent[c] of Canada's seafood exports being sold with greater product information abroad than required at home.

IF CANADA IS ALREADY REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH LABELLING REGULATIONS FOR OVERSEAS MARKETS, WHY NOT AT HOME?

[b]This is referred to by the CFIA as the "Country of Origin" for imported fish and seafood. For fish and seafood produced or caught domestically the "Country of Origin" label is voluntary. "Indication of Geographic Origin" for all seafood is voluntary.

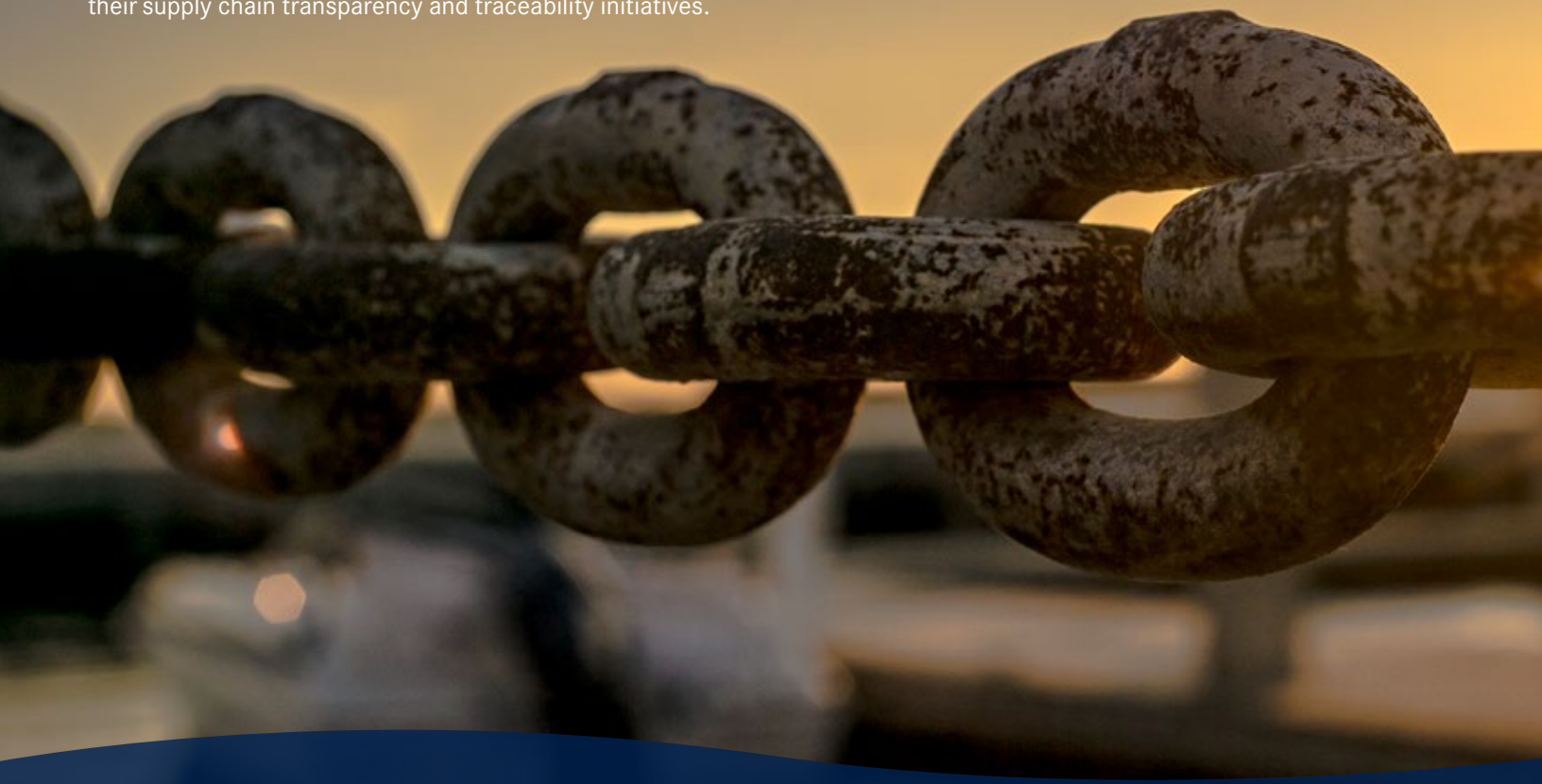
[c]64 per cent to the United States; 10 per cent to the European Union in 2015.

Canadians are at risk of seafood fraud.

EU AND US RAISE THE BAR WITH TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY INITIATIVES

Improvements in labelling requirements in other jurisdictions have been driven, in part, by the results of genetic testing of seafood. For example, genetic testing of fish in EU and US seafood markets have exposed extensive fraud, where seafood labelled as one type of fish is in fact an entirely different species.[14,15] Following this testing, stricter labelling regulations and governance have been implemented in the EU with a resulting reduction in instances of mislabelled seafood.[16] Most recently, in response to a report that found that one-third of seafood tested at restaurants was mislabelled,[17] the EU has pushed to expand seafood labelling requirements beyond major retailers into an EU-wide labelling scheme, with traceability for all fishery products sold in restaurants and shops.[18] Genetic surveys in Canada have also revealed seafood mislabelling as a serious concern,[19,20] yet so far no improvements to seafood labelling have been made.

As a result of widespread media coverage of human rights violations in Thai shrimp fisheries, the US established the Presidential Task Force on Combatting IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud.[21] In March, 2015 the task force published an action plan[22] with 15 recommendations, including two that support a traceability program to "track seafood from point of harvest to entry into U.S. commerce." The National Ocean Council Committee on IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud (NOC Committee) has identified 16 priority species and species groups, representing approximately 40 per cent of seafood by value imported to the US[23] for the first phase of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program. Again, Canada lags behind the EU and US in their supply chain transparency and traceability initiatives.



Canada is already required to comply with labelling regulations to export its seafood to overseas markets, and already collects important information from seafood imports – but Canadians are left eating seafood in the dark.

CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

Recent developments in trade agreements provide further incentive to upgrade Canada's labelling regulations. The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA),[24] which was signed in October 2016 and passed by the EU Parliament in February 2017,[25] opens up EU markets to more of Canada's seafood by removing tariffs. As part of the negotiations,[26] Canadian fisheries products are expected to meet Rules of Origin (RoO).[d] Without domestic mandatory requirements that govern product origin, Canada's accountability to CETA is put at risk.

The fisheries negotiations also include sustainable development commitments, with a reference to combatting IUU fishing, which overlap with the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing that entered into force in June 2016.[27] Canada is expected to ratify the agreement in 2017.[28] Furthermore, the US Presidential Task Force on Combatting IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud's upcoming traceability program will place additional onus on Canadian fisheries and exporters, with Atlantic cod, swordfish and tuna amongst the priority species.[29] A robust labelling and traceability legislative framework in Canada would aid in closing opportunities for IUU products to enter the marketplace, both domestically and abroad.

> "As a Chef who feeds thousands of people a year, in a country surrounded by three oceans, and as a father, the sustainability of the seafood I serve and eat is extremely important. That's why I believe knowing the what, where, how and who of our seafood is too important to ignore. I challenge us all to demand better seafood labelling in Canada – for the health of Canadians and the sustainability of our fish and seafood resources into the future.
>
> ***Ned Bell**, Ocean Wise Executive Chef, Founder, Chefs for Oceans*

[d]The rationale for Rules of Origin (RoO) is to avoid the potential of a third country wrongly benefitting from the trade agreement. For example, an imported fish product from South America to Canada, which is then processed in Canada, cannot be exported to the EU as 'Canadian'.

Canadian seafood consumers may be unknowing contributors to environmental degradation and/or social injustice.

WHY DOES SEAFOOD LABELLING MATTER?

Detailed labelling can help those in the seafood supply chain to safeguard themselves against the reputational risk of sourcing from fisheries or farms with negative environmental or socio-economic practices. Better labelling requirements can ensure better transparency throughout the supply chain, benefitting the fishing industry, suppliers, food service industries, retailers and consumers. It can also benefit government agencies (such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Statistics Canada (StatsCan) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)) by providing more robust and accurate data on imports and exports, as well as the ability to more efficiently respond to health and safety issues identified with a certain product or species.

As Canada's major seafood trading partners increase their traceability requirements for seafood imports, the need for better labelling is quickly becoming a necessity for seafood trade. Incorporating additional information on labels in Canada– such as species scientific name, geographic origin, production method and gear type or farming method –will better align domestic regulations with major trading partners and will help to facilitate smoother sale and trade operations for Canadian businesses.

Without proper labelling, it is impossible for consumers to make informed choices or to advocate for changes along the supply chain. Increasing knowledge about other global commodities–such as paper products, palm oil and diamonds– led to changes in how these products are made, harvested, grown or extracted, and decreased environmental and social impacts.[30] Canada's seafood deserves the same attention.

IT'S TIME FOR CANADIANS TO STOP EATING SEAFOOD IN THE DARK.

> Canada exports about half a million tonnes of seafood each year, which means that many of our fish producers and processors are already working hard to be transparent and traceable, in an effort to meet the requirements of those countries importing Canadian fish and seafood. So they are already doing the hard part. Requiring Canadian labelling to include that information is an easy next step that will help to democratize seafood sustainability information to Canadian consumers.
>
> ***Dr. Megan Bailey**, Assistant Professor Canada Research Chair Integrated Ocean and Coastal Governance, Dalhousie University*

TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

It is important to note that more detailed labels will require better supply chain traceability to verify the labels' claims. The accuracy of the labels depends directly on the traceability of the product.

Fish and seafood remain the top traded food products internationally.[31] This trade occurs via a complex supply chain where seafood is notorious for changing hands, and likely countries, numerous times.[32] Vital product information can be lost or misrepresented (accidentally or intentionally) often with few repercussions. Traceability systems allow for the transparent transfer of product information along the entire supply chain. Businesses should be required to have documentation on hand to quickly and accurately trace their product back to its origin. Accurate and honest labelling requires supply chain traceability from the boat or farm to the plate.

To remain competitive, Canadian seafood needs to adhere to international requirements for traceability.

WHAT CAN A MORE DETAILED LABEL UNVEIL?

Sustainability: Comprehensive labelling that requires the species' name, geographic origin and method of harvest is necessary to verify a product's environmental sustainability. With this information, supply chain purchasers and consumers can identify and avoid species that are overfished, endangered, poorly managed or harvested using destructive methods. It allows them to instead source their seafood from environmentally responsible fisheries and farms.

Supporting Local/Domestic Fisheries: Labelling seafood with its geographic origin allows Canadians to choose local seafood products, and support domestic fisheries and aquaculture.

Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) Fishing: Comprehensive labelling provides transparency about the source fishery. With IUU present in up to 31 per cent of global catches,[33] stronger labelling throughout the supply chain, in concert with traceability, can help combat the risk of IUU seafood entering the marketplace.

Health: Labelling provides the opportunity for concerned consumers to better understand the potential health benefits and concerns of seafood products based on the species, production method and geographic origin.

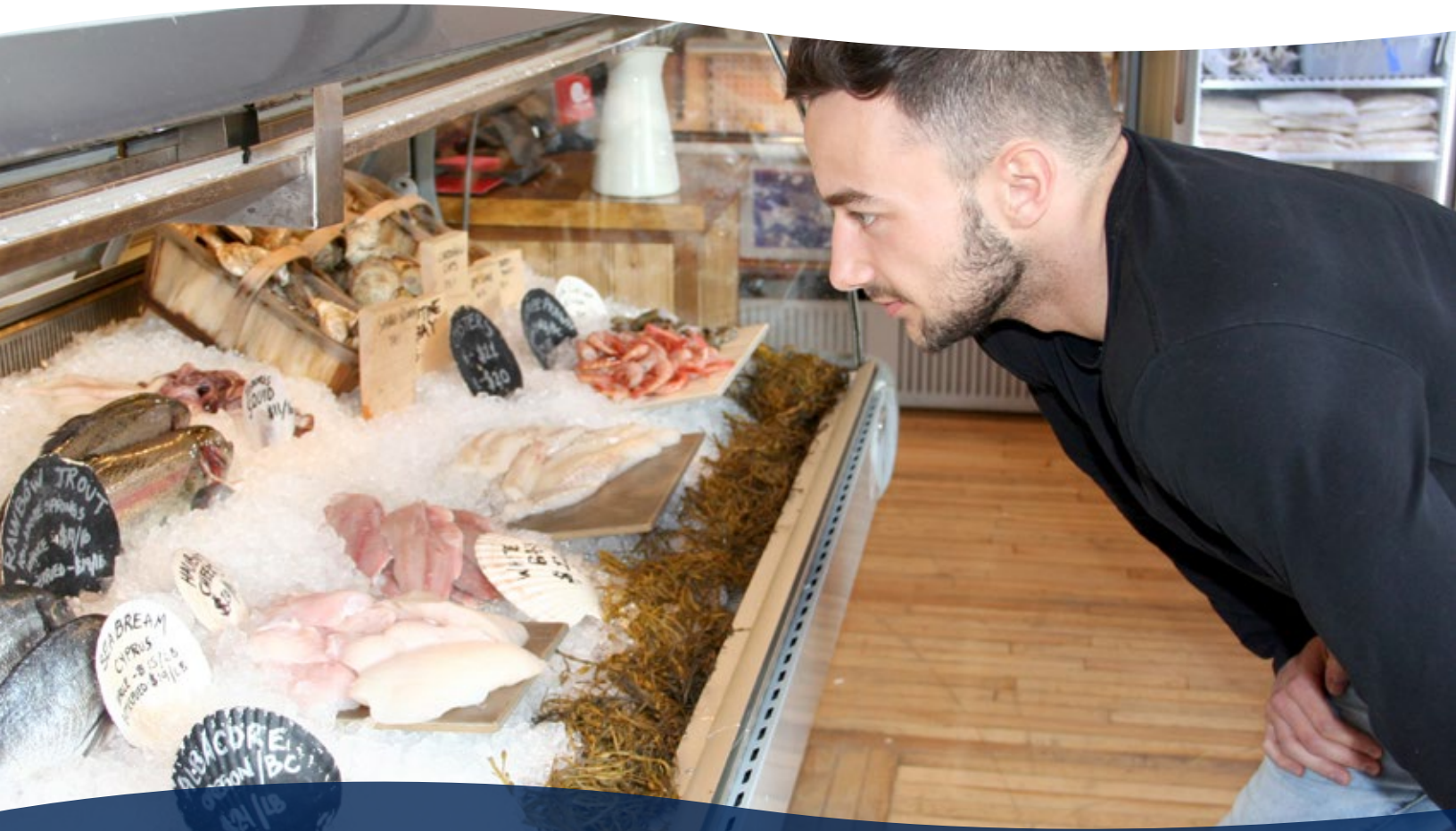
FIGURE 4. Seafood Supply Chain
A traditional seafood supply chain is complex, and products pass through many hands before reaching the consumer. Having a national traceability system to ensure that key information follows the seafood product through each step of the supply chain, can help verify the accuracy of the information at the point of sale. The information about the item - such as what it is, and where it was caught - will therefore be uniform all the way from boat or farm to the consumer.

With better labelling, businesses and consumers will be able to confidently buy seafood that supports the environmental and socio-economic sustainability they value.

Human Rights and Social Issues: Detailed labelling provides the transparency needed to identify products with a higher risk of coming from a supply chain with human rights abuses. Incidences of abuse, slavery, forced and child labour, kidnapping and murder within the seafood supply chain are a tragic reality[34,35,36] and the corporate social responsibility risk for retailers and supply chain purchasers are significant. Accurate labelling avoids accidentally sourcing from these fisheries or aquaculture operations.

Economic Sustainability and Quality Assurance: Accurate labelling enables Canadian seafood products to remain competitive with primary trading partners and facilitates international obligations and agreements. There are economic incentives throughout the supply chain to ensure that the product is labelled truthfully, allowing for its sustainability (and hence price) to be more easily understood by buyers (e.g. gear used, or processing and handling standards). This, in turn, rewards and incentivizes fishermen to employ sustainable practices and processors to maintain high operational standards.

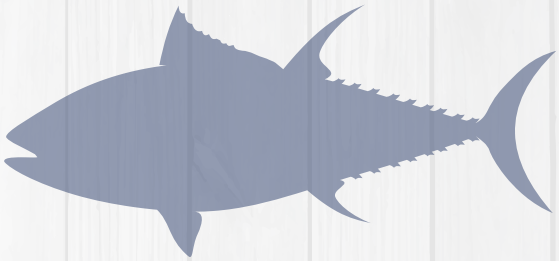
Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO): In addition to the basic elements that a more detailed seafood label would provide, there is overwhelming consumer support for mandatory labelling of GMOs.[37] With GM salmon soon to enter the Canadian marketplace,[38] labelling that would differentiate it from other salmon would help consumers consciously choose their preferred products.



LABELLING CASE STUDIES: CANADA'S FISHY LABELS

SeaChoice selected three commonly found seafood items in the Canadian marketplace: tuna, shrimp and rockfish. These case studies illustrate what Canada's current seafood labels don't tell you.

TUNA



Tuna is a staple item in many Canadian supermarkets, restaurants and kitchen cupboards. Tuna imports typically include albacore, bigeye, bluefin, skipjack and yellowfin tuna.[39] However, the CFIA fish list allows 14 species to be labelled simply as "tuna".[40]

IUU and overfishing have long plagued many tuna populations.[41] Skipjack caught with fish aggregating devices (FADs) have high levels of **bycatch**, including juvenile tuna, sharks and sea turtles.[42] More than half of Canada's tuna imports come from these red-ranked skipjack fisheries.[43] Recent media reports highlighted **human rights violations** in global tuna fleets, from Thailand[44] to Hawaii.[45] Studies show **mercury levels** in tuna vary significantly,[46] posing a legitimate concern particularly for pregnant women. Health Canada recommends limiting consumption of certain tuna species.[47]

SHRIMP

Canada exports more cold-water shrimp than any other country in the world.[48] However, shrimp is also one of the country's largest seafood imports.[49] The shrimp that is available in the Canadian market is predominantly farmed tropical shrimp,[50] which can be laden with a myriad of environmental, social, or health related issues. According to the CFIA fish list, 40 species of shrimp can be labelled simply as "shrimp".[51]

Imported farmed shrimp can be associated with **environmental destruction** of natural coastal areas. Often densely stocked, production may use large amounts of **antibiotics, pesticides** and other **chemicals**.[52] This has raised health concerns where chemical residues have been found in shrimp being consumed by humans.[53]

Wild-caught shrimp comes with other concerns, such as the use of **destructive** bottom trawl **gear** on sensitive benthic environments, large amounts of **bycatch**[54] and an association with **human rights abuses**, either on board the vessel or throughout processing (such as in peeling sheds).[55]

ROCKFISH

There are over 100 species of fish worldwide belonging to the genus *Sebastes*, more commonly referred to as “rockfish”. Although biologically related, **sustainability** ranges from endangered to highly sustainable. Rockfish are a difficult species to manage as they are very slow growing, long-lived, late to reproduce, are caught by all **gear types** and don’t survive as **bycatch**. Rougheye rockfish have been found as old as 205 years![56]

Canada is a large producer of rockfish on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, with 22 species making up the majority of the catch. The CFIA fish list allows them all to be labelled as “rockfish”, while some can also be labelled as snapper, Pacific snapper, redfish and rosefish.[57]

Without better labelling requiring the scientific name, country of origin and gear type, there is no way to verify the sustainability of the product at the point of sale in Canada.

WHAT YOUR LABEL DOESN’T TELL YOU

Nutrition Facts* Valeur nutritive

Serving Size About 1 Piece (145g)
Portion environ 1 morceau (145g)

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
IUU	**?**%
Human Rights Violations	**?**%
Overfishing	**?**%
Bycatch	**?**%
Habitat Damage	**?**%
Antibiotics	**?**%
Pesticides	**?**%
Mercury Levels	**?**%

Without information on a species scientific name, production method, harvest method, or geographic origin, it is nearly impossible to determine whether or not it is associated with the issues listed above. More detailed labelling can help shed some light on the likelihood of these issues being associated with seafood products.

*This image is not an example of what seafood labels should include. It is meant to illustrate the fact that there can be many associated issues with a seafood item that Canadian consumers are unable to identify when key labelling information is not included on a label or package.

Seafood labels must include the species scientific (Latin) name, along with where and how it was caught or farmed – key determinants of a products environmental and social sustainability.

A SEAFOOD LABELLING ACTION PLAN FOR CANADA

The review of regulatory measures in other jurisdictions demonstrates a movement toward stricter labelling regulations for seafood products abroad. This presents Canada with an opportunity to increase transparency throughout the seafood supply chain and reduce mislabelling of domestically sold seafood products. There is pressure for Canada to remain competitive and synchronized with major seafood trade partners. Through recently improved traceability requirements and international trade agreements, there are incentives from both the EU and the US for Canada to strengthen its labelling regulations.[58]

SeaChoice calls on the government to take the following two actions to improve seafood labelling in Canada. By following these actions, the country will remain competitive in the seafood export market. Businesses and consumers will then be able to confidently buy seafood that supports the environmental and socio-economic sustainability they value.

SEAFOOD LABELLING ACTION PLAN

1 The Canadian government should amend its food labelling policy to include the following information on seafood products:

- Species' scientific name
- Production method *(farmed or wild)*
- Geographic origin *(region of catch or area of production)*
- Harvest method *(gear type or farming method)*

2 Canadian food labelling policies should incorporate an onus on supply chain actors to provide the necessary product information from source to customer to improve traceability.

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APPENDIX: SEAFOOD LABELLING REQUIREMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has, arguably, the most robust regulations on seafood labelling. The Common Organisation of the Markets regulation requires EU retailers to provide the common name, scientific name, production method, geographic origin, fishing gear type and last country of processing (e.g. identification mark). In addition, the regulations also apply to the labels on seafood sold to mass caterers (i.e. restaurants, institutions and catering). However, mass caterers are not currently required to provide this information to their customers. This is likely to change in the near future.[59]

The omission of a farming method requirement is a shortcoming of the EU regulation. There is also the potential for common names (called commercial designation) to create confusion because a number of species can be blanketed under one name.[60] However, the requirement to list the species' scientific name alongside the common name helps to overcome this issue. Overall, the EU labelling policies and regulations are comprehensive, despite having to navigate multiple countries and languages. The requirements of the Common Organisation of the Markets complement the general EU rules on food information to consumers "and contribute to more transparency on the market as they enable consumers to make informed choices on the products they buy".[61]

Additionally, the EU has some of the world's leading traceability regulations. This is primarily as a result of the EU legislation on IUU fishing, which mandates catch documentation for seafood products imported into the EU from non-EU sources.[62]

The Common Organisation of the Markets of Fishery and Aquaculture Products		
REGULATORY BODY	Council of the European Union, and Member States	
POLICY NAME	The Common Organisation of the Markets of Fishery and Aquaculture Products	(Under the Common Fisheries Policy)
DATE ENACTED	December 13, 2014	
LINK TO POLICY	**The Common Organisation of the Markets, Consumer Information**	**Infographic of proper label**
LABELLING DETAILS	Identify the commercial and scientific name of the species; whether the product was caught at sea or in freshwater, or farmed; catch or production area and the type of fishing gear used to catch the product; whether the product has been defrosted and the date of minimum durability (also known as the 'best before' or 'use by' date), in line with general food labelling rules. Products may also be accompanied by additional voluntary information, such as the date of catch or landing, information on environmental, social or ethical matters, production techniques and nutritional content.	**For fish caught at sea:** In the Northeast Atlantic, Mediterranean and Black Sea: the name of the FAO sub-area or division, as well as a simplification for the consumer (a clearer name, a map or a pictogram); In other waters: the name of the FAO area. **For freshwater fish:** the body of water and the EU country of origin or the non-EU country of provenance. **For farmed fish:** EU or non-EU country of final rearing period. Note: common names are typically listed on labels as well, but are usually determined by fish lists of the importing EU country. For example, the UK provides a list titled, 'Commercial designations of fish'.
SPECIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS	Fish, Molluscs, Crustaceans, Algae. Unprocessed and certain processed (e.g. salted, smoked, cooked in-shell) fishery and aquaculture products; Prepacked or non-prepacked.	Products such as canned, composite products and breaded product are not covered in the regulation.
APPLICABLE BUSINESSES	Retailers and mass caterers.	
SUPPLY CHAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY	The labelling requirements must follow the seafood product from boat or farm to retailer. Therefore, all supply chain actors must provide the required information at each step of the chain. Furthermore, for imported seafood originating from non-EU sources, catch documentation must accompany the product.	
SPECIFIC TRACEABILITY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS	The EU fisheries control regulation requires supply chain traceability of EU harvested and landed unprocessed seafood products. It does not apply to processed products. A catch certification scheme applies to imported products from non-EU sources.	

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) regulation requires most U.S. retailers to provide the country of origin and production method (wild or farmed) for all fish or shellfish. Suppliers also need to make these two pieces of information available to their buyers. However, there are significant shortcomings to the regulation. The regulation's definition of 'country of origin' can conceal a product's original 'country of *harvest*' (i.e. where the seafood product was originally caught or harvested), as products that experience "substantial transformation" such as filleting or processing, are required to list the country for which this transformation occurred as the country of origin. An example of this shortcoming would be that an Alaskan caught halibut, processed in China, would therefore have 'China' listed as the country-of-origin.[63] In addition, some processed products such as canned tuna and fish sticks are exempt from COOL. Lastly, the majority of fishmongers and all restaurants are exempt from the regulation.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Seafood List is a guidance only document. The list inherently allows for misrepresentation and mislabelling to occur, as the list is non-binding (with exceptions). The list allows for ambiguity and blanketing of many species under one market name.

Country Of Origin Labelling (COOL) Regulation		
REGULATORY BODY	USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service	Responsible for the administration and enforcement of COOL
POLICY NAME	Agricultural Marketing Act with the following amendments: The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002; the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008; Consolidated Appropriations Act 2016	
DATE ENACTED	Seafood – September 30, 2004 and mandatory compliance date April 4, 2005	
LINK TO POLICY	**Country of Origin Labelling overview**	
LABELLING DETAILS	Identify the country of origin and method of production (i.e. wild or farmed).	Method of production can be listed as: farm-raised, farmed, wild caught or wild.
SPECIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS	Fish and shellfish covered commodities include fresh and frozen fillets, steaks, nuggets, and any other flesh from a wild or farm-raised fish or shellfish.	Overarching "covered commodities": muscle cuts and ground lamb, chicken, goat, wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish, perishable agricultural commodities, peanuts, pecans, ginseng, and macadamia nuts.
APPLICABLE BUSINESSES	Retailers subject to the licensing requirements of the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act of 1930 (PACA). PACA licensed retailers purchase more than $230,000 of fresh or frozen produce a year.	Generally, includes most grocery stores and supermarkets. However smaller business such as fish mongers may be exempt as they do not meet the threshold of fresh produce. Food service and restaurants are exempt.
SUPPLY CHAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY	Suppliers of COOL commodities to applicable retailers (directly or indirectly) must provide country information and method of production to the buyer	Suppliers can provide this information on the product itself, on the master shipping container or a document such as an invoice.

The FDA Seafood List (FDA's Guide to Acceptable Market Names for Seafood sold in Interstate Commerce)		
REGULATORY BODY	Food and Drug Administration	Responsible for "ensuring that the nation's seafood supply, both domestic and imported, is safe, sanitary, wholesome, and honestly labelled".
POLICY NAME	N/A	
DATE ENACTED	First published in 1988 as The Fish List. 1993 as Seafood List when invertebrate species included. Typically updated annually.	
LINK TO POLICY	FDA Seafood **List**	
LABELLING DETAILS	Guidance only. Assists suppliers on the "acceptable market name".	The list is non-binding, except for the following, where regulation or law require specific common or usual names: Pacific whiting, Bonito, Crabmeat, Greenland turbot, Canned oysters, Canned Pacific salmon, Canned tuna and Catfish.
SPECIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS	1800+ records	
APPLICABLE BUSINESSES	All markets sold in interstate commerce, however non-binding.	
SUPPLY CHAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY	N/A	

SPECIFIC TRACEABILITY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS	**The Presidential Task Force on Combating IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud** has developed the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) for 16 seafood species and species groups, representing approximately 40% of seafood imports by value. Beginning 1st January, 2018, all importers of the affected species under the SIMP, will be required to provide all necessary sourcing and chain or custody information directly to the government via an electronic form. Species need to be identified using the ASFIS 3-alpha code which is based on the species' scientific name, not common name.

CANADA

Regulations for fish and seafood labelling in Canada are outlined in a variety of acts which are overseen and enforced by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Health Canada. Currently the only uniform requirement for seafood sold in Canada for human consumption is that it lists a Common Name on the packaging or label. While domestic products do not need to be labelled as a "Product of Canada" (it is voluntary), *Country of Origin* is technically required for all imported seafood. Unfortunately, this only means that the country where the last major transformation or alteration took place (like filleting or de-shelling) needs to be listed, not the country or body of water where the fish was *actually* caught or farmed.

To find an acceptable 'common name', the CFIA provides the *Fish List* as a guidance document. It is not legally binding, but simply recommended. A common name may also be from other legislation, or the name by which it is generally known. This ambiguity in even the common name means that there can be hundreds of fish with dozens of common names that can be used interchangeably.

It should be noted that the acts and regulations do not extend to restaurants or food service establishments, pet foods, fish meal, or minced fish paste.

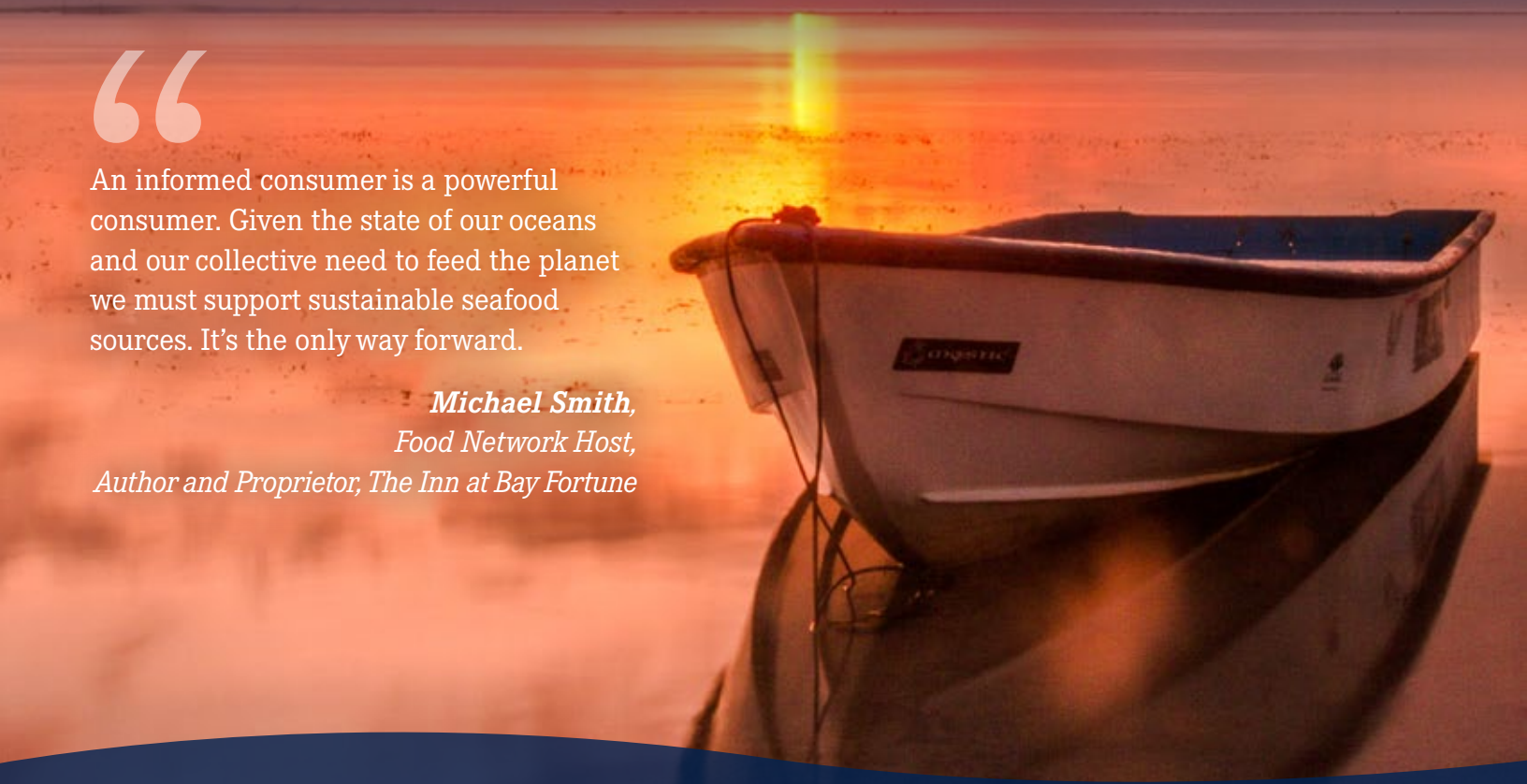
Various: Canada Food and Drug Act; Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act; Fish Inspection Act		
REGULATORY BODY	Health Canada Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)	Health, Safety and Nutritional Quality Labelling Non-Health and Safety related labelling and enforcement
POLICY NAME	Canada Food and Drug Act; Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, Fish Inspection Act.	New Safe Food for Canadians Act (2012) and subsequent regulations (2017/2018) will incorporate the Meat Inspection Act, Fish Inspection Act, Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act and Canadian Agricultural Products Act.
DATE ENACTED	1985	
LINK TO POLICY	**Food and Drug Act; Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act; Fish Inspection Act**	**Labelling Requirements for fish and fish products.**
LABELLING DETAILS	Identifies the common name and country of origin (country where it underwent last substantial transformation) for only prepackaged fish or fish products. Requirements: **Mandatory** for imports. Optional for domestic products.	Common Name: As listed in CFIA's fish list (see below), or FDR, or other legislation, or how it's commonly **known.** **Link to Proper Label.**
SPECIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS	Fish and Fish Products for human consumption, canned seafood, some fish oils (single species, or various fish and marine species).	Exempt: Surumi (minced fish paste), fish oil made with: multiple fish species, multiple marine animal species (but must be listed in ingredients section), products not for human consumption, like pet food and fishmeal.
APPLICABLE BUSINESSES	Any retail business selling a seafood product.	Food service and restaurants are exempt.
SUPPLY CHAINS RESPONSIBILITY	N/A	

The CFIA Fish List (CFIA's List of Canadian Acceptable Common Names for Fish and Seafood)		
REGULATORY BODY	CFIA	
POLICY NAME	N/A	"This policy is intended to ensure that these names are not false, misleading or deceptive, are supported by reliable scientific references and foster fair market practices."
LINK TO POLICY	**CFIA Fish List**	
LABELLING DETAILS	Guidance only. Assists suppliers on the "acceptable common name". "The use of common names that are not on the CFIA Fish List can be assessed against the requirement that no person shall package or label fish in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive [27, FIR; 5(1), FDA; 7(1), CPLA]."	Additional notes: Generic common names are not permitted unless listed in the Fish Inspection Regulations (eg. Fish fillets, fish portions); "Pacific salmon" is not an acceptable common name because of different market values of different species. The geographic location where the fish was harvested is optional.
SPECIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS	908 species, 1900 records due to several acceptable names for one species	
BUSINESSES IT APPLIES TO	All of industry, however it is non-binding.	
SUPPLY CHAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY	N/A	

SPECIFIC TRACEABILITY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS	There are discussions in the New Safe Food for Canadians Act (2012) and subsequent regulations (2017/2018) currently in progress, however these are not to end consumer, and only available to CFIA upon request, as the focus is for food recalls. Under CFIA's import inspection program, the following sourcing details are required on all Fish Import Notification forms: common name, Taxonomic Serial Number (TSN), production method (wild or farmed) and country of harvest. The TSN is associated with a scientific name within the CFIA Fish List. In addition, importers need to provide the 'species risk group', as per the CFIA Fish List, which specifies whether the species is known to be a health risk (i.e. environmental contaminants, histamine production or marine toxins). However, no current regulations require this information to be passed beyond CFIA to the supply chain.

ACRONYMS

CETA	Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
COOL	Country of Origin Labelling
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FLMI	Food Labelling and Modernization Initiative
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
RoO	Rules of Origin
StatsCan	Statistics Canada
TSN	Taxonomic Serial Number
US	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture



“An informed consumer is a powerful consumer. Given the state of our oceans and our collective need to feed the planet we must support sustainable seafood sources. It’s the only way forward.

Michael Smith,
Food Network Host,
Author and Proprietor, The Inn at Bay Fortune

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David Suzuki Foundation
SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

Ecology Action Centre

LIVING OCEANS