

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'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.



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



SeaChoice retail partners

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

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