

## SEAFOOD PROGRESS: COSTCO CANADA



Seafood Progress profile as published in July 2021.

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### REPORTING PERIOD

August 2020 - July 2021

### LOCATION

Across Canada

### NUMBER OF STORES

98

### WEBSITE

<https://www.costco.ca/>

## RETAILER SNAPSHOT

**Costco Canada has declined to engage** with SeaChoice on its sustainable seafood policy since Seafood Progress began in 2018. As a result, its profile is based solely on publicly available information, some of which is suspected to be outdated. This contributes to Costco being the **lowest scoring retailer** on Seafood Progress.










**Environmental Sustainability Commitment.** Costco's sustainable seafood policy does not indicate if any shelf stable products (e.g. canned tuna) or seafood company brand products (e.g. products made by X or Y) are covered or which stores it applies to, nor does it specify explicit timelines for achieving the commitment or if it is supported by a traceability policy. In terms of reporting, Costco does not share the percentage of seafood sold that meets its commitment through any public channels. Costco uses the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) eco-certifications as a basis for sourcing certain species and products.

**Social Responsibility Commitment.** Costco's global Code of Conduct for suppliers includes clear objectives and expectations for seafood suppliers, but no traceability policy or timelines.

**Scope of Commitment.** See below for information on which types of products are included in the scope of Costco's sustainable seafood policy.

# COMMITMENT SCOPE

How retailers' sustainable seafood policies and commitments apply to different segments of their products.

	FRESH	FROZEN	SHELF STABLE
Grocery store brand			
Seafood company brand			
No brand			

● = Retailer has made a commitment to this segment     
 ● = Retailer has not made a commitment to this segment  
● = Retailer does not sell products in this segment

**Grocery store brands:** Owned and controlled by Costco Canada  
**Seafood company brands:** Owned by companies that supply many retailers  
**No brand:** Fresh and frozen seafood packaged without branding

## WHAT CAN CONSUMERS DO TO HELP?

*Take action!*

Costco's seafood customers are not being informed of its progress on its sustainable seafood commitment. Retailers listen closely to what **YOU** have to say. Leverage that power to drive important changes throughout the supply chain!

**Select a topic to ADVOCATE for Costco Canada to improve.**

- ▶ Commitment
- ▶ Transparency
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Data Collection

Another way to take action is to let retailers know that their efforts are noticed and that you want them to continue on the path towards best practice.

**Select a topic to ACKNOWLEDGE Costco Canada's efforts.**

▶ Responsible Sourcing

▶ Supporting Industry Improvements

**See below for the remainder of Costco Canada's 2021 profile summary.**

▶ Other retailer information

**STEP 1: DOES THE RETAILER HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMITMENT ON SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD?**

Costco Canada



National Average

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year.

**STEP ELEMENTS**

### 1.1 Has a publicly available commitment or policy to source more environmentally sustainable seafood

Costco Canada



#### SCORING RATIONALE

Costco's two primary objectives are to source wild and farmed seafood products that have been produced in ways that "meet current demands without compromising the availability of scarce resources for future generations" and to consider biological, ecological and regulatory factors when making sourcing decisions. For certain species that have been recognized as being 'at great risk' (including Atlantic cod, swordfish and redfish), Costco is committed to only sourcing products if the fishery has been certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Costco also states that it is aiming for all of its farmed shrimp, salmon and pangasius products to be certified by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). As of 2020, "all tilapia sold at Costco is from farms and suppliers that are ASC certified."

**COMMITMENT SCOPE**  
How retailers' sustainable seafood policies and commitments apply to different segments of their products.

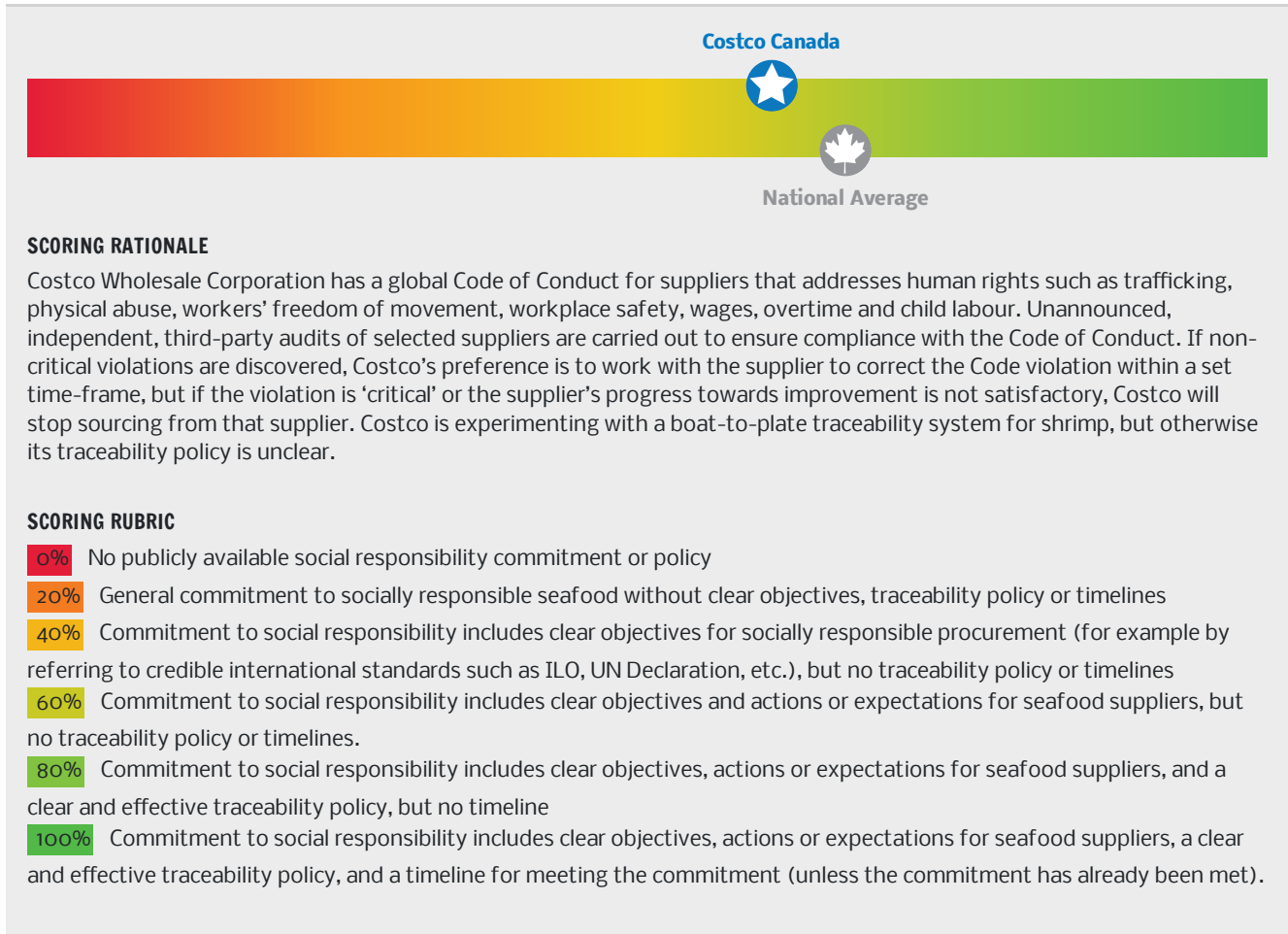
	FRESH	FROZEN	SHELF STABLE
<b>Costco Wholesale</b>			
<b>Grocery store brand</b>			
<b>Seafood company brand</b>			
<b>No brand</b>			

● = Retailer has made a commitment to this segment  
● = Retailer has not made a commitment to this segment  
● = Retailer does not sell products in this segment

#### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0%** No publicly available environmental sustainability commitment or policy
- 20%** General commitment to environmentally sustainable seafood without clear objectives, traceability policy or timelines
- 40%** Commitment to environmental sustainability that includes clear objectives for sustainable procurement, but no traceability policy or timelines
- 60%** Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards (such as Seafood Watch or Ocean Wise rankings, eco-certifications, etc.), but no traceability policy or timelines
- 80%** Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards and a clear and effective traceability policy, but no timeline
- 100%** Commitment to environmental sustainability includes clear objectives that are supported by references to credible standards, a clear and effective traceability policy, and a timeline for meeting the commitment (unless the commitment has already been met).

**1.2 Has a publicly available commitment or policy to source more socially responsible seafood?**



**1.3 Does the retailer cover all banners that sell seafood in its sustainable seafood commitment?**



### 1.4 Does the retailer cover all shelf stable and national brand products in its sustainable seafood commitment?

Costco Canada



National Average

#### SCORING RATIONALE

There is no information in Costco's global sustainable seafood policy regarding which product categories and segments are included in its policy.

#### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% Retailer's commitment covers neither all of their shelf stable or national brand products
- 50% Retailer's commitment covers all of their shelf stable or national brand products
- 100% Retailer's commitment covers all of their shelf stable AND national brand products

### STEP 2: IS THE RETAILER COLLECTING DATA TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMITMENT?

Costco Canada



National Average

What information is the retailer collecting to monitor the environmental and social sustainability of their seafood products?

The step score is based on the average of Step 2 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

#### STEP ELEMENTS

## 2.1 Retailer collects data on species scientific (Latin) name for seafood products being sold - the "what"

Costco Canada



National Average

### SCORING RATIONALE

No information in public commitment.

### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% No data collected (or no information)
- 50% Data collected for some products
- 100% Data collected for all products

## 2.2 Retailer collects data on country of origin of seafood products being sold - the "where"

Costco Canada



National Average

### SCORING RATIONALE

No information in public commitment.

### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% No data collected (or no information)
- 50% Data collected for some products
- 100% Data collected for all products

### 2.3 Retailer collects data on whether the seafood products being sold are wild or farmed - the "how"

Costco Canada



**SCORING RATIONALE**

No information in public commitment.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% No data collected (or no information)
- 50% Data collected for some products
- 100% Data collected for all products

### 2.4 Retailer collects data on the gear type or farming methods for seafood products being sold - the "how"

Costco Canada



**SCORING RATIONALE**

No information in public commitment.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% No data collected (or no information)
- 50% Data collected for some products
- 100% Data collected for all products

## STEP 3: IS THE RETAILER MAKING RESPONSIBLE SOURCING DECISIONS?

Costco Canada



Are the retailer’s procurement decisions supporting their environmental and social sustainability commitments?

The step score is based on the average of Step 3 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that KPI 3.3 was changed in 2019 from “Retailer works with suppliers to address potential human rights and labour abuses, and support sustainable livelihoods for producers” to more specific indicators around retailers’ agreements with their suppliers/vendors to uphold their environmental and social commitments.



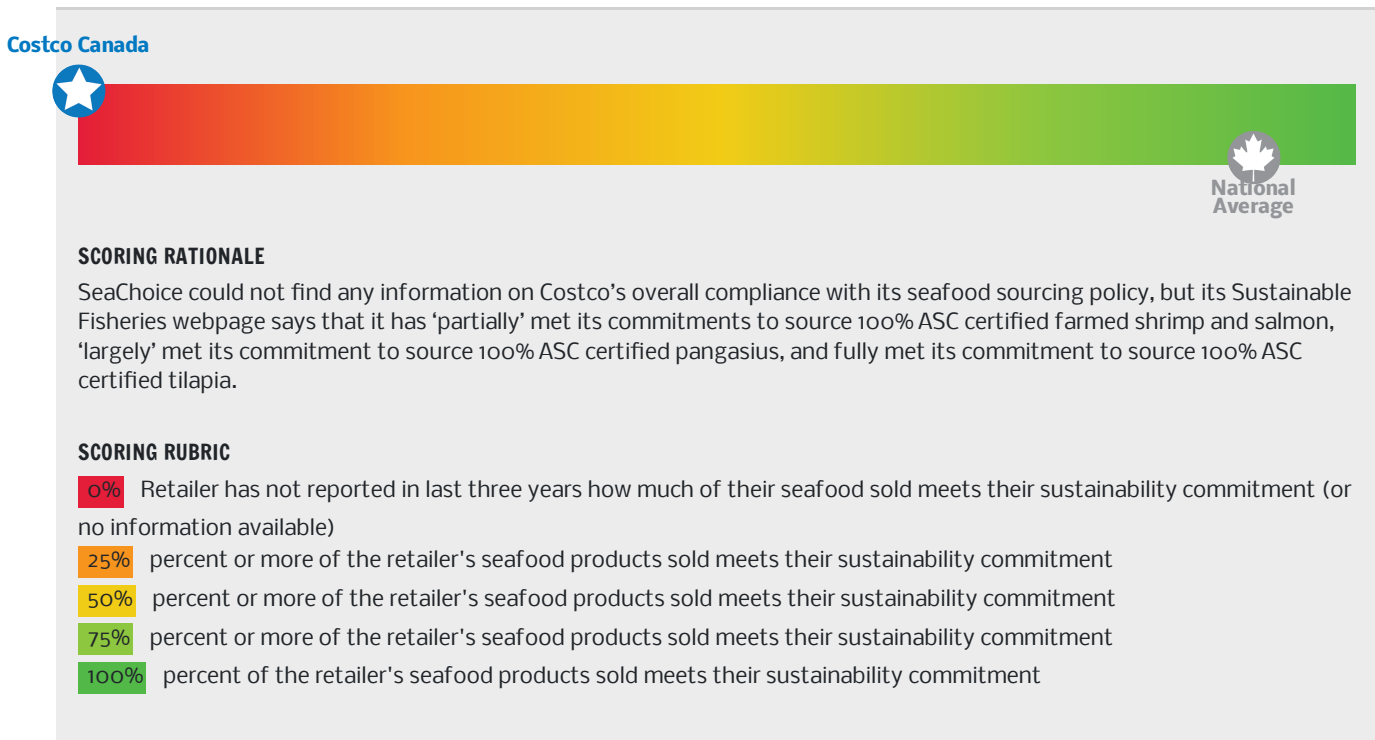
If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

**STEP ELEMENTS**

**3.1 Retailer uses an established seafood certification or ranking standard to inform purchasing decisions.**



**3.2 Retailer can demonstrate that X% of their seafood sold in the last three years meets their sustainability criteria by volume/value.**



**3.3 Suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct to uphold the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment.**

Costco Canada



**SCORING RATIONALE**

Costco Wholesale Corporation's Supplier Code of Conduct covers its social responsibility commitment but not its seafood-specific environmental commitments, for example in relation to sourcing MSC and ASC certified products. SeaChoice was unable to find any information on whether Costco Canada uses any other Codes of Conduct with its seafood suppliers.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0%** Suppliers are not required to sign a code of conduct (or no information)
- 25%** Some suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers some of the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment
- 50%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers some of the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment
- 75%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment
- 100%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the retailer's environmental sustainability commitment and the retailer actively verifies that this commitment is being upheld.

**3.4 Suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct to uphold the retailer's social responsibility commitment.**

Costco Canada



**SCORING RATIONALE**

Costco Wholesale Corporation's Supplier Code of Conduct applies to all suppliers to provide merchandise to Costco, and it includes its social responsibility commitment.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0%** Suppliers are not required to sign a code of conduct (or no information)
- 25%** Some suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers some of the retailer's social responsibility commitment.
- 50%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers some of the retailer's social responsibility commitment.
- 75%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the retailer's social responsibility commitment.
- 100%** All suppliers are required to sign a code of conduct that covers all of the retailer's social responsibility commitment and the retailer actively verifies that this commitment is being upheld.

**STEP 4: IS THE RETAILER TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR COMMITMENT?**





National Average

Is the retailer making information regarding the environmental and social performance of their seafood products publicly available and are they reporting on progress against their sustainable seafood commitment?

The step score is based on the average of Step 4 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

**STEP ELEMENTS**

**4.1 Retailer labels seafood with the information that allows consumers to make informed decisions - what (species' scientific name), where (country or region of origin), and how (wild/farmed and harvest method)**





Costco Canada



National Average

**SCORING RATIONALE**


No information in commitment.


-  Species scientific (Latin) name
-  Country of origin
-  Wild or farmed
-  Gear type or farming method


**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% Retailer does not label products with the information (or no information)
- 50% Retailer labels some products with the information
- 100% Retailer labels all products with the information

**4.2 Retailer labels products with an ecolabel, allowing consumers to make informed decisions OR all products fit under a standard and is communicated as such**

Costco Canada 




National Average 


**SCORING RATIONALE**  
 There is no information on Costco’s use of eco-labels in its commitment, but SeaChoice’s citizen science labelling studies show that Costco uses the MSC logo on at least some products identified in its Sustainable Fisheries policy.


**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% Retailer does not label products with an ecolabel as appropriate (or no information)
- 100% Retailer labels products with an ecolabel as appropriate OR all products fit under a standard and is communicated as such

**4.3 List of products procured with region and gear type data has been made available (e.g. as per Ocean Disclosure Project)**

Costco Canada 



National Average 

**SCORING RATIONALE**  
 Costco does not publicly disclose this information.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% No list of products procured with region and gear type has been made available (or no information)
- 50% Some seafood products with region and gear type has been made available
- 100% All seafood products with region and gear type has been made available

**4.4 Retailer publicly reports how much of its seafood meets its sustainability criteria (by volume or value of sales).**

Costco Canada



National Average

**SCORING RATIONALE**

SeaChoice could not find any information on Costco’s overall compliance with its seafood sourcing policy, but its Sustainable Fisheries webpage says that it has ‘partially’ met its commitments to source 100% ASC certified farmed shrimp and salmon, ‘largely’ met its commitment to source 100% ASC certified pangasius, and has fully met its commitment to source 100% ASC certified tilapia.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% No public information on how the retailer is doing to meet its commitment
- 50% Retailer has at one point in the past reported publicly how much of its seafood sold meets its commitment
- 100% Retailer regularly reports publicly how much of its seafood sold meets its commitment (by volume/value, at least every two years)

**STEP 5: DOES THE RETAILER EDUCATE STAFF, CUSTOMERS AND/OR VENDORS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD?**

Costco Canada



National Average

Is the retailer educating their employees, customers, suppliers and other key stakeholders about their sustainable seafood commitment, environmental and social issues in seafood, and the importance of traceability?

The step score is based on the average of Step 5 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that KPI 5.3 changed in 2019 from “Suppliers are required to sign a Code of Conduct to uphold the retailer’s sustainable seafood policy” (now covered by KPIs 3.3 and 3.4) to an indicator of what actions retailers have taken to educate their suppliers/vendors about their sustainable seafood commitment.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the ‘June 2019’ button below the score bar.

**STEP ELEMENTS**

### 5.1 Training programs are conducted for seafood staff.

Costco Canada



National Average

**SCORING RATIONALE**

No information in commitment.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% Training programs not conducted for seafood staff (or no information)
- 50% Training programs sometimes conducted or for only some seafood staff
- 75% Training programs conducted for all seafood staff, but infrequently (less than every two years)
- 100% Training programs regularly (at least every two years) conducted for all seafood staff

### 5.2 There is a description of the retailer's sustainable seafood program for customers in store

Costco Canada



National Average

**SCORING RATIONALE**

No information in commitment.

**SCORING RUBRIC**

- 0% There is no description of the sustainable seafood program in store (or no information)
- 50% This is some description of the sustainable seafood program in store
- 100% There is a comprehensive description of the sustainable seafood program in store

### 5.3 The retailer has taken actions to ensure its suppliers or vendors are aware of its sustainable seafood commitment or policy.

Costco Canada



#### SCORING RATIONALE

Costco Wholesale Corporation seems to be taking action to address potential human rights and labour abuses through its Code of Conduct for suppliers and to support sustainable livelihoods for producers through its engagement in Fishery Improvement Projects with its NGO partner (WWF), but SeaChoice was unable to confirm what specific actions Costco Canada is engaged in, particularly in relation to making its suppliers aware of its Sustainable Fisheries policy.

#### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0%** The retailer has taken no actions OR no information available
- 25%** The retailer sends its suppliers or vendors a copy of its sustainable seafood commitment or policy
- 50%** The retailer shares its sustainable seafood commitment or policy and sometimes engages with its suppliers to help ensure the products they supply meet the retailer's expectations.
- 75%** The retailer shares its sustainable seafood commitment or policy and regularly engages with its suppliers to help ensure the products they supply meet the retailer's expectations.
- 100%** The retailer shares its sustainable seafood commitment or policy, has a clear strategy to engage with its suppliers and provides direct support (e.g. training, resources) to help ensure all seafood product are procured in line with its policies.

### STEP 6: DOES THE RETAILER SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE?

Costco Canada



National Average

Does the retailer sell 'Priority Seafood' products (seafood that has high volume of sales in Canadian retail stores and that is generally not recommended by the Ocean Wise Seafood Program), and if so, do they support improvement and how?

The step score is based on the average of Step 6 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that this Step was changed significantly in 2019 to introduce two additional 'Support Improvement' actions for each of the Priority Seafood products. This means that if a retailer was engaged in the same actions in 2019 as in 2018, and no more, their score will appear to have decreased). Additionally, KPIs 6.4 and 6.5 on other SeaChoice priority seafood products were generalized into a new KPI that allows retailers to showcase any other actions they are taking to support improvement of specific seafood products (besides shrimp, farmed salmon and skipjack), or to support improvements in seafood sustainability in general.

If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

#### STEP ELEMENTS

## 6.1 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of farmed Atlantic salmon (either Canadian produced or imported)?

Costco Canada



National Average

### SCORING RATIONALE

Since 2018, Costco's website has stated that it is "actively engaging to transition more salmon farms to reach the ASC standard by working with suppliers and WWF to develop and implement AIPs [Aquaculture Improvement Projects]". However, as of May 2021 SeaChoice has not found evidence that these actions are ongoing. Additionally, Costco's goal is to "source farmed salmon only from suppliers that have been certified by the ASC standard. This goal has been partially achieved."

- Only sells farmed salmon products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by ASC, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts)
- Outreach to policymakers to advocate for salmon farming management to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially responsible
- Collaborating with other companies pre-competitively to improve salmon aquaculture practices
- Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve salmon farming practices
- Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are not ASC certified, Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- Preferentially procures farmed salmon from sources that are ASC certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- Sourcing decisions also prioritize products with high levels of social responsibility and traceability

### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% Sells the product and does not support improvements by doing any of the actions listed or no information available
- 17% Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement
- 34% Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement
- 51% Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement
- 68% Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement
- 85% Retailer is engaged in five improvement activities or doesn't sell the product
- 100% Retailer is engaged in all improvement activities or doesn't sell the product



## 6.2 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of imported farmed shrimps and prawns?

Costco Canada



National Average

### SCORING RATIONALE

Since 2018, Costco's website has stated that it participated in the implementation of the ASC shrimp standard and has been "actively engaging to help transition more shrimp farms to reach the ASC standard by working with [its] suppliers and World Wildlife Fund to develop and implement Aquaculture Improvement Projects". However, as of May 2021 SeaChoice has not found evidence that these actions are ongoing. Costco's goal is to be sourcing farmed shrimp only from suppliers that have been certified under ASC standards.

- X Only sells farmed shrimp and prawn products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by ASC or BAP, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts)
- X Outreach to policymakers to advocate for shrimp and prawn farming management to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially responsible
- X Collaborating with other companies pre-competitively to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices
- X Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices
- X Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are not ASC or BAP certified, Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- ✓ Preferentially procures shrimp and prawns from sources that are ASC or BAP certified, Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- X Sourcing decisions also prioritize products with high levels of social responsibility and traceability

### SCORING RUBRIC

- 0% Retailer sells the product and does not support improvements by doing any of the actions listed or no information available
- 17% Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement
- 34% Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement
- 51% Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement
- 68% Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement
- 85% Retailer is engaged in five actions to support improvement
- 100% Retailer is engaged in all support improvement activities or doesn't sell the product

### 6.3 Does the retailer support improvements in the production of skipjack tuna?



## 6.4 Is the retailer engaged in any actions to improve production of any other seafood products?

