

SEAFOOD PROGRESS: BUY-LOW FOODS



Legacy report of this retailer's Seafood Progress profile as published in August 2020.

Report generated on: September 1st, 2020

REPORTING PERIOD

July 2019 - August 2020

LOCATION

British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan

NUMBER OF STORES

38

WEBSITE

<http://www.buy-lowfoods.com>

RETAILER SNAPSHOT

In 2013, Buy-Low Foods and Nesters Market ("Buy-Low") committed to removing all red-listed seafood (from sources rated 'Avoid' by Seafood Watch) and replacing them with more sustainable alternatives. In 2015, Buy-Low became the first major retailer in North America to have achieved this. Buy-Low has committed to procuring all its fresh and frozen seafood products from sustainable (seafood Recommended by Ocean Wise or rated either 'Good Alternative' or 'Best Choice' by Seafood Watch) and traceable sources, or from fisheries/farms that are engaged in credible improvement projects. Uniquely among major Canadian retailers, Buy-Low does not sell any farmed Atlantic salmon due to sustainability concerns.

Buy-Low provides good staff training on seafood sustainability issues and its suppliers must sign a comprehensive Code of Conduct that commits them to providing products that are in line with Buy-Low's environmental sustainability commitment. In 2019, Buy-Low formalized its social responsibility policy with suppliers by requiring them to sign a Supplier Code of Conduct on Social Responsibility.

In 2018, Buy-Low committed to increasing the information available to consumers on seafood labels by adding species' scientific names and whether the product was wild or farmed, and in 2019 it committed to adding country/region of origin on as many fresh and frozen products as possible.










Buy-Low is supporting improvements in the production of farmed imported shrimp and prawn through preferential sourcing of eco-certified and Ocean Wise recommended products, and SeaChoice recommends that Buy-Low now take action to support improvements on other Priority Seafood commodities, such as Skipjack tuna.


In the process of developing this profile, SeaChoice corresponded with Glen Genereux, the Meat Buyer/ Meat Merchandising Manager for Buy-Low Foods Ltd and Nesters Market, and Claire Dawson, Senior Accounts Representative at Ocean Wise.


Scope information: see below for information on which types of products are included in the scope of Buy-Low Foods' sustainable seafood policy

COMMITMENT SCOPE

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

 BUY-LOW FOODS	FRESH	FROZEN	SHELF STABLE
Grocery store brand			
Seafood company brand			
No brand			N/A

 = Retailer has made a commitment to this segment

 = Retailer has not made a commitment to this segment

Note: Some shelf stable private label products, like smoked salmon, are covered by the policy, but items such as canned tuna are not.

The Buy-Low Foods Group (owned by the Jim Pattison Group) owns the following banners (store brands):

- Budget Foods
- Buy-Low Foods
- Choices Market
- Meinhardt Fine Foods

- Nesters Market
- Quality Foods
- Shop n'Save

Banners in red are excluded from their retailer's sustainable seafood policy.

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



Does the policy include time-bound objectives for addressing environmental issues, social concerns and traceability?

The step score is based on the average of Step 1 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

Note that the KPIs changed from 2018 to 2019 to move the assessment of retailers' traceability commitments from a stand-alone KPI to a component of the scoring for the KPIs relating to 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

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

Buy-Low Foods














SCORING RATIONALE

Buy-Low Foods’ Sustainable Seafood Reference Manual (unpublished, 2013) reports that its sustainable seafood commitment was to, by 2015, ensure that all fresh and frozen seafood were from sustainable and traceable sources, or were in a credible improvement project. The goal to remove all red-listed (as determined by Seafood Watch) seafood products from Buy-Low Foods’ stores was achieved in 2015.

COMMITMENT SCOPE

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

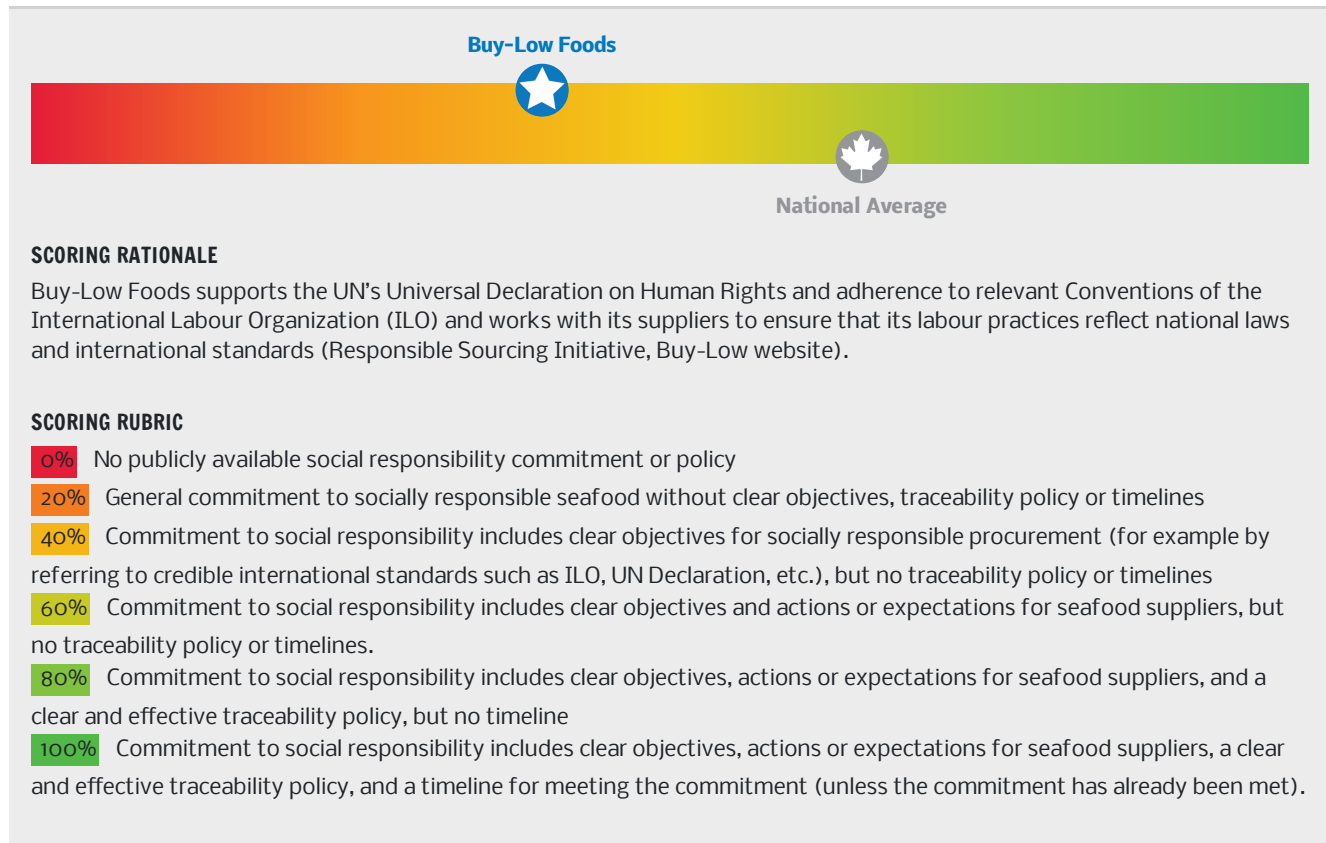
 BUY-LOW FOODS	FRESH	FROZEN	SHELF STABLE
Grocery store brand			
Seafood company brand			
No brand			N/A
<div><div> = Retailer has made a commitment to this segment</div><div> = Retailer has not made a commitment to this segment</div></div>			

Note: Some shelf stable private label products, like smoked salmon, are covered by the policy, but items such as canned tuna are not.

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



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



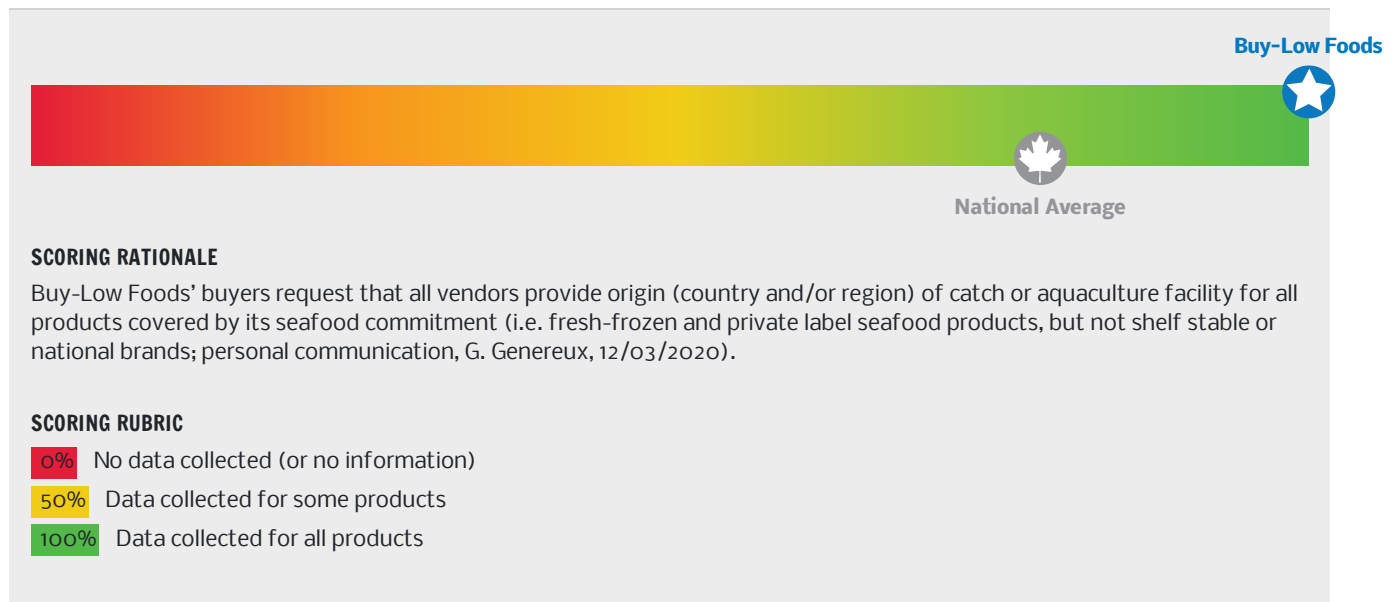
What information is the retailer collecting to monitor the environmental and social sustainability of their seafood products?

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.

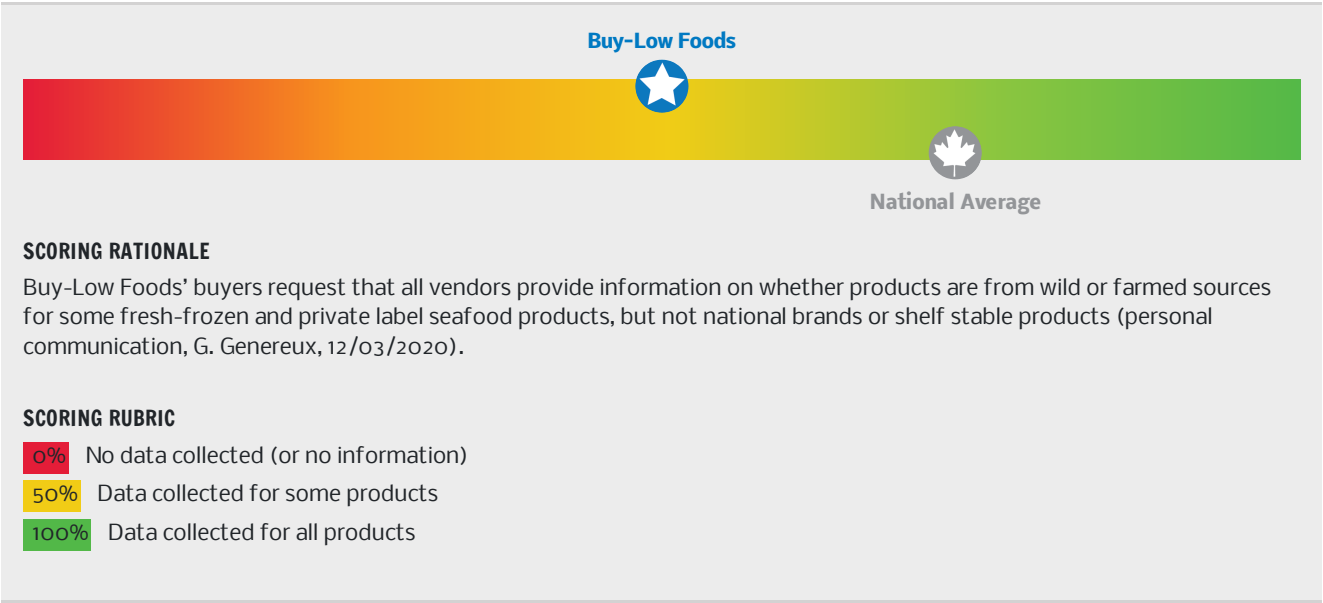
If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the 'June 2019' button below the score bar.

STEP ELEMENTS

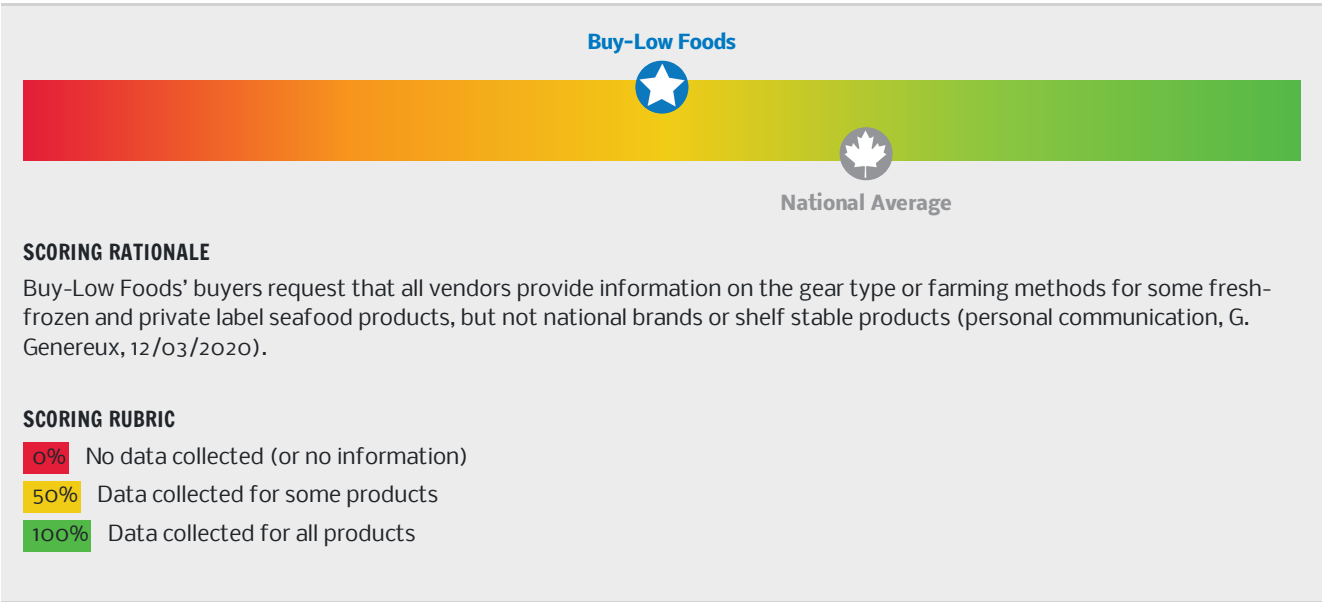
2.2 Retailer collects data on country of origin of seafood products being sold - the "where"



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



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



STEP 3: IS THE RETAILER MAKING RESPONSIBLE SOURCING DECISIONS?



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

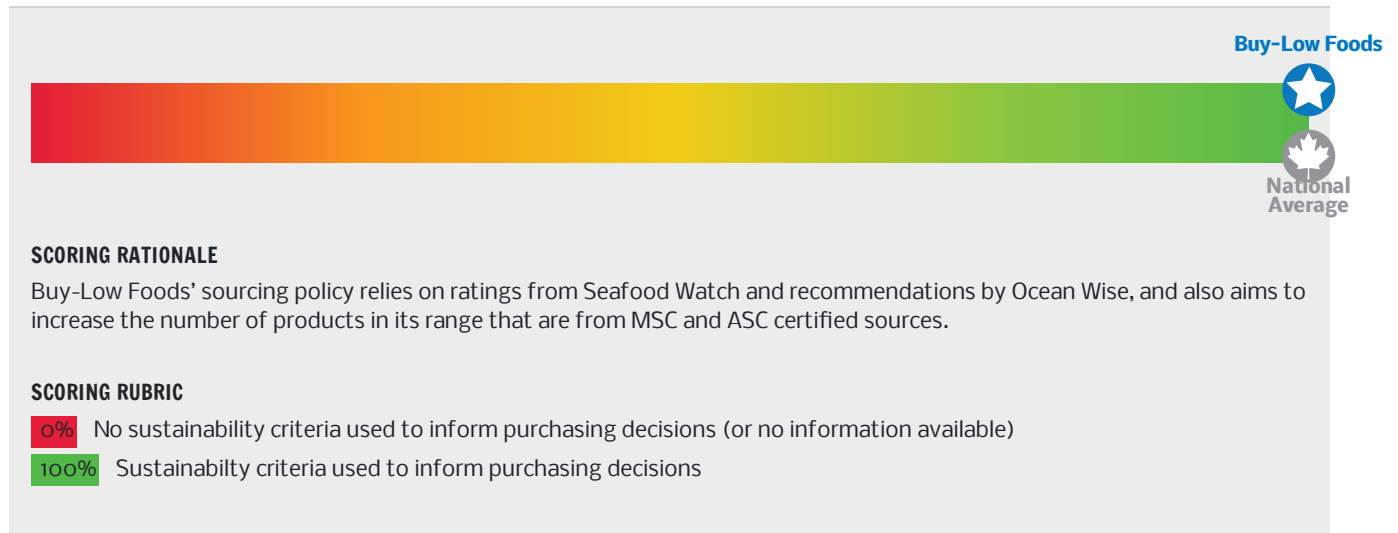
The step score is based on the average of Step 3 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

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.

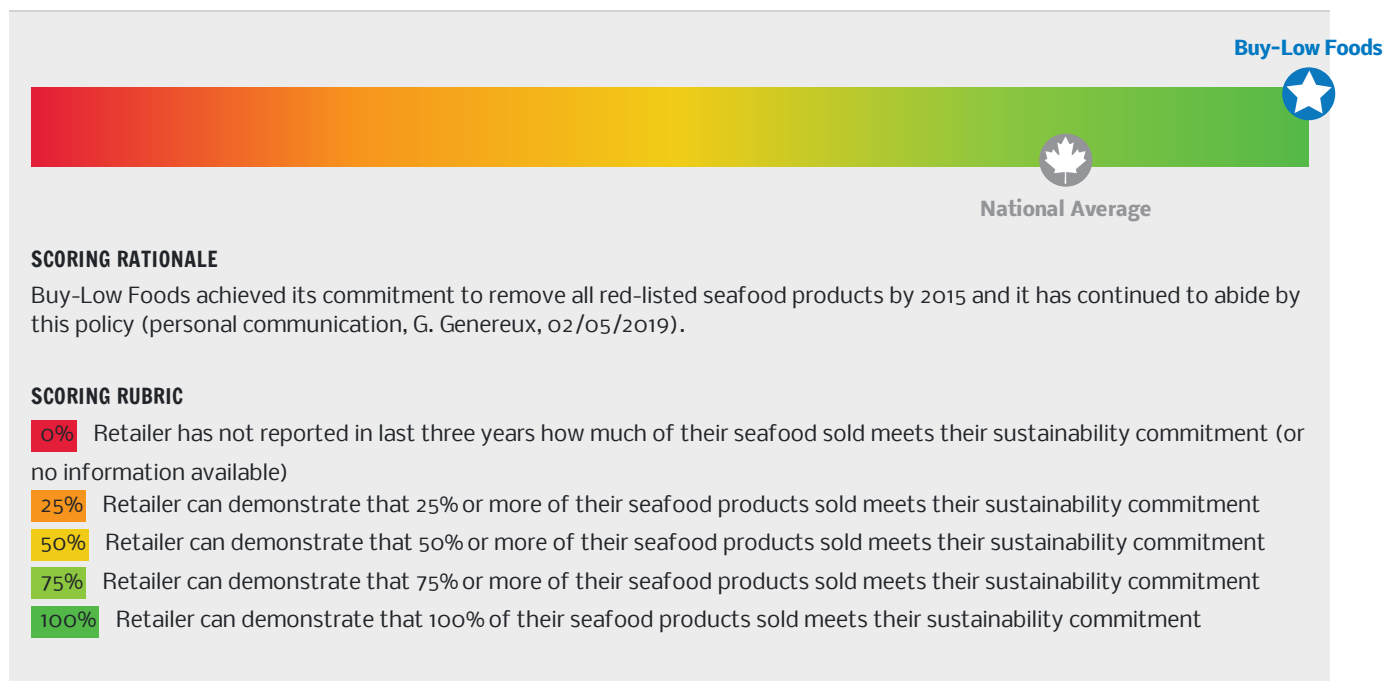
If it looks like you are only seeing the score for one year it is because the score did not change from year to year. Try clicking off the ‘June 2019’ button below the score bar.

STEP ELEMENTS

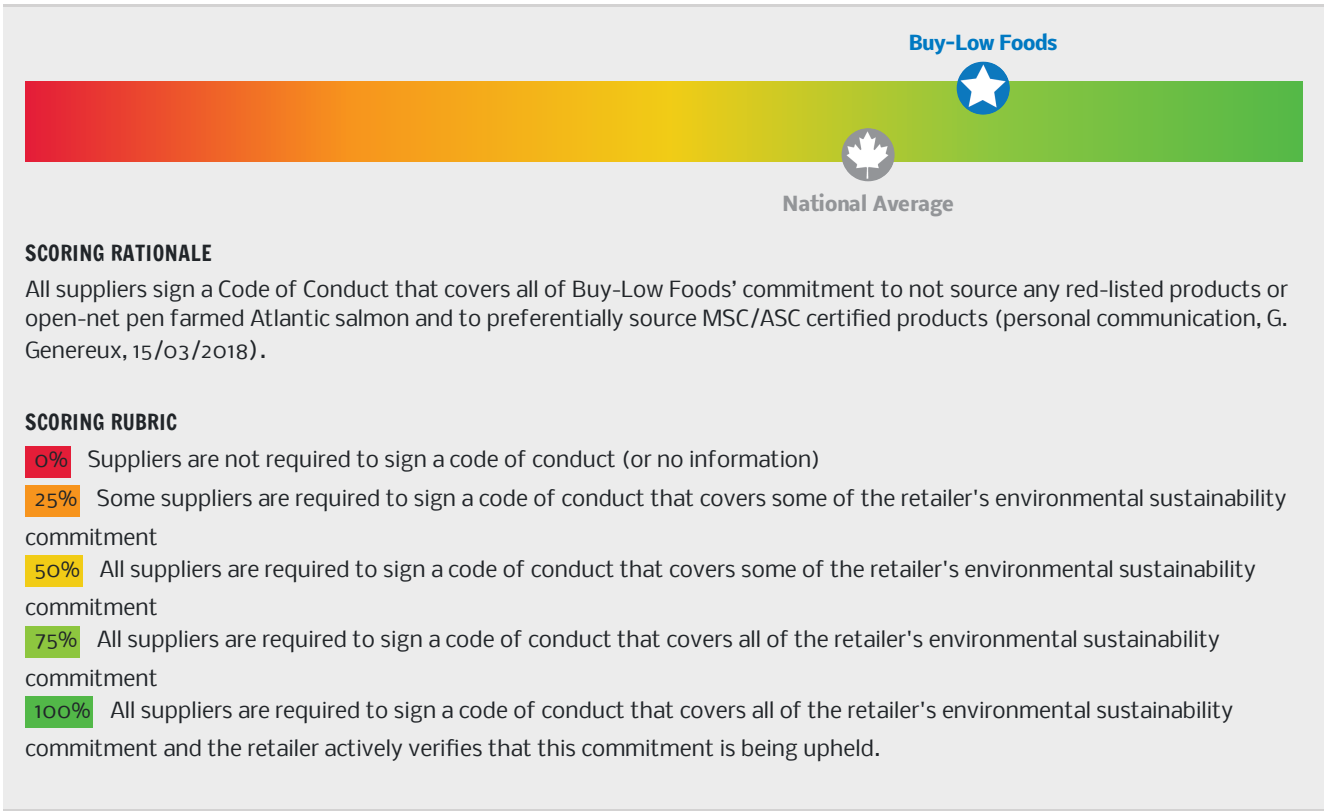
3.1 Retailer uses an established seafood certification or ranking standard to inform purchasing decisions.



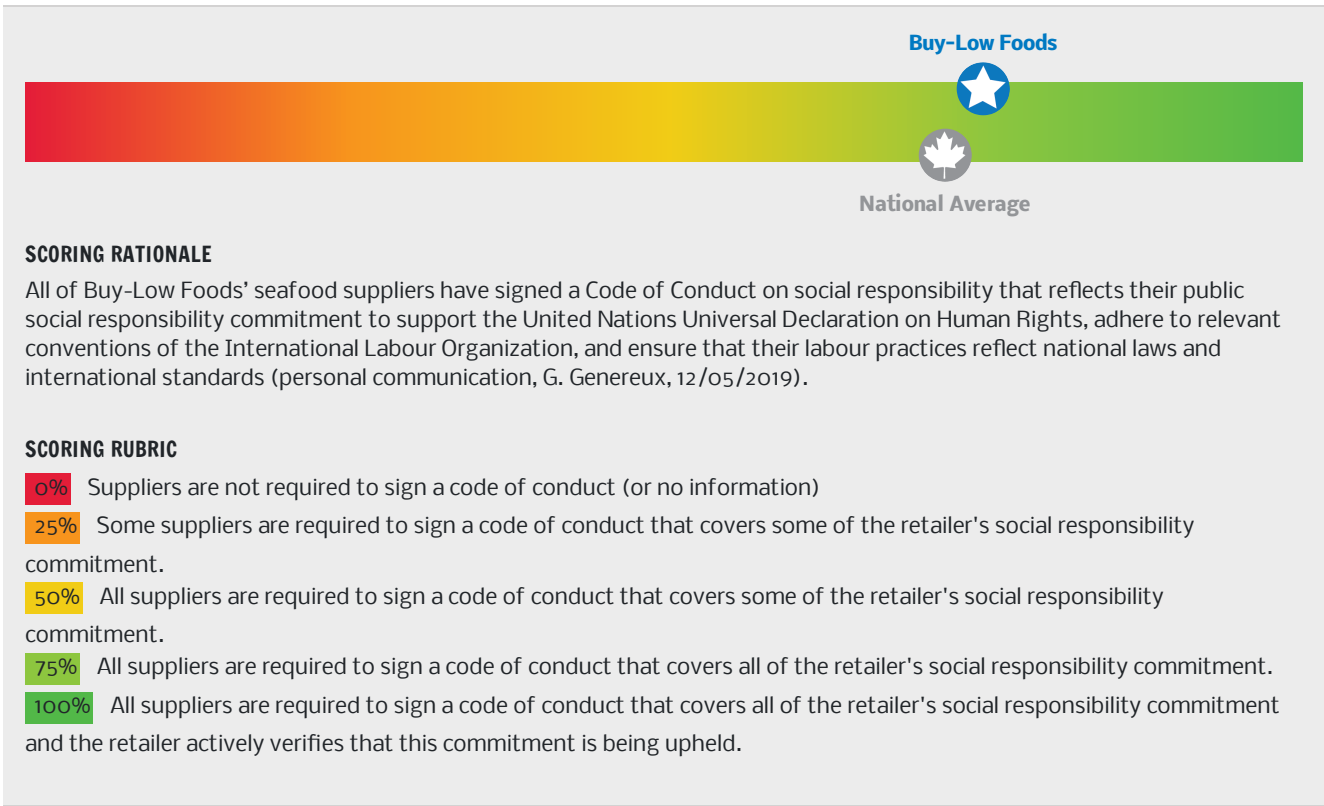
3.2 Retailer can demonstrate that X% of their seafood sold in the last three years meets their sustainability criteria by volume/value.



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



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



STEP 4: IS THE RETAILER TRANSPARENT ABOUT THEIR COMMITMENT?



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.

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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)

Buy-Low Foods

National Average

SCORING RATIONALE

In 2018, Buy-Low Foods changed its fresh counter and store packaged labels to include scientific (Latin) names and whether the product is wild or farmed. Buy-Low is now looking at adding country/region of origin labelling for its fresh and store packaged products (personal communication, G. Genereux, 12/02/2020).

Species Latin name (the what)

Country of origin (the where)

Wild or farmed (the how part 1)

Gear type or farming methods (the how part 2)

SCORING RUBRIC

0%

 Retailer does not label products with the information (or no information)

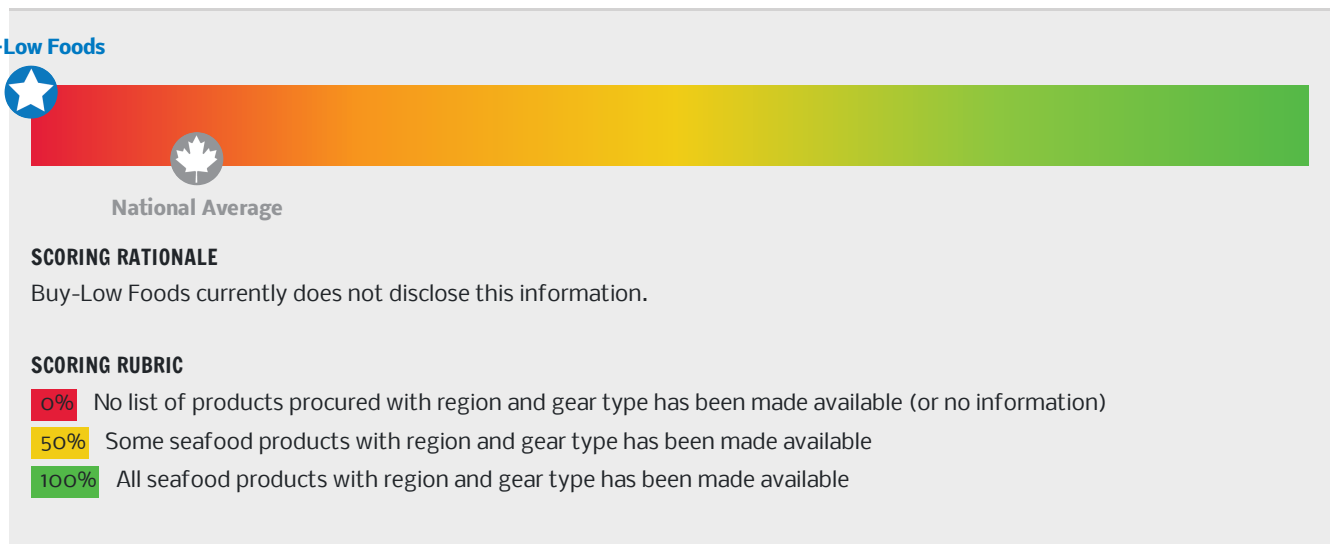
50%

 Retailer labels some products with the information

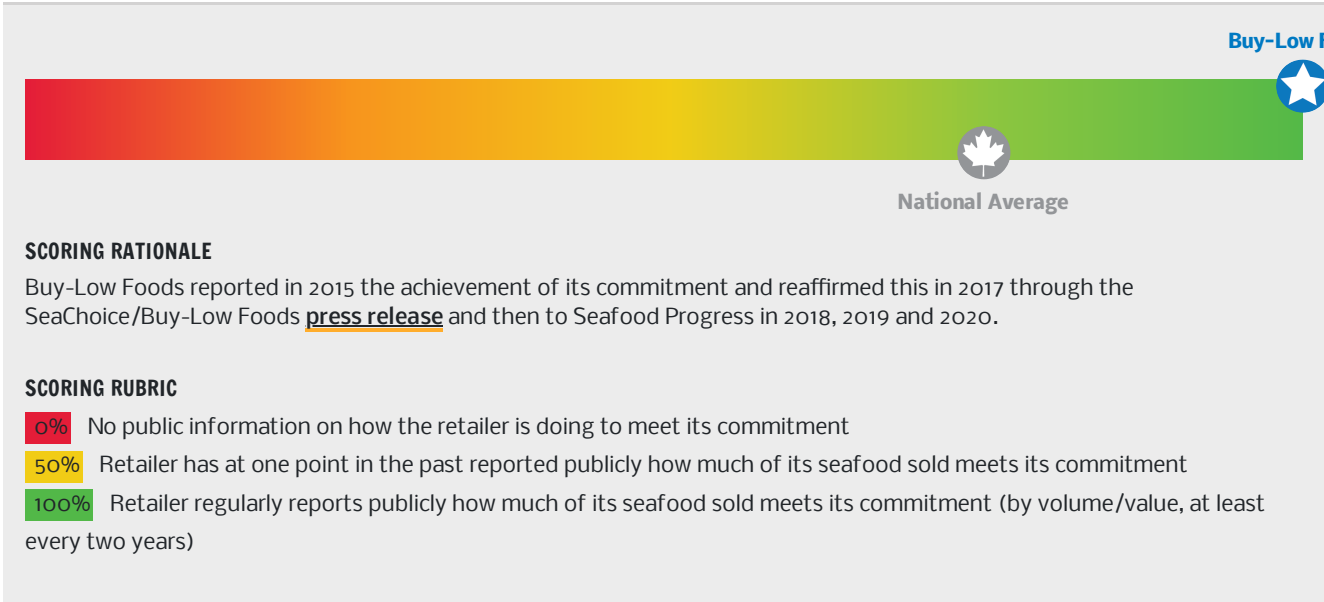
100%

 Retailer labels all products with the information

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



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



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



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?

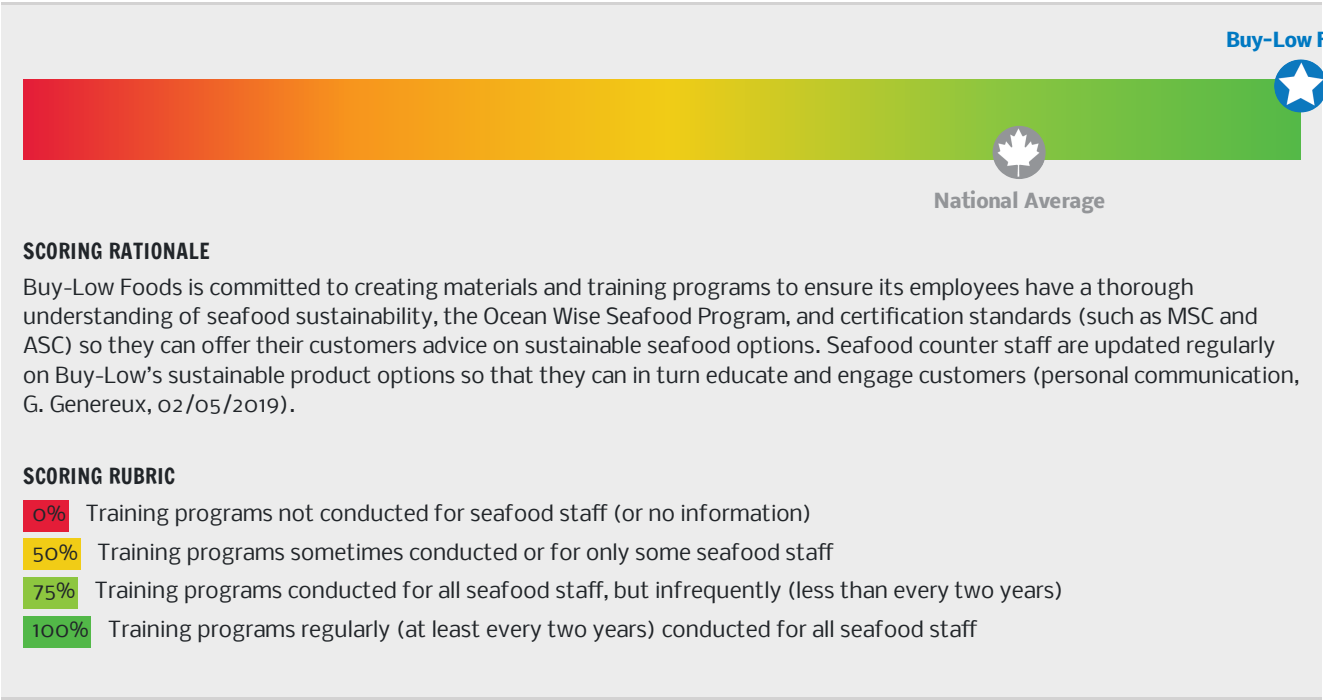
The step score is based on the average of Step 5 key performance indicators (KPIs, or step elements) listed below; click the + signs for more detailed information.

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

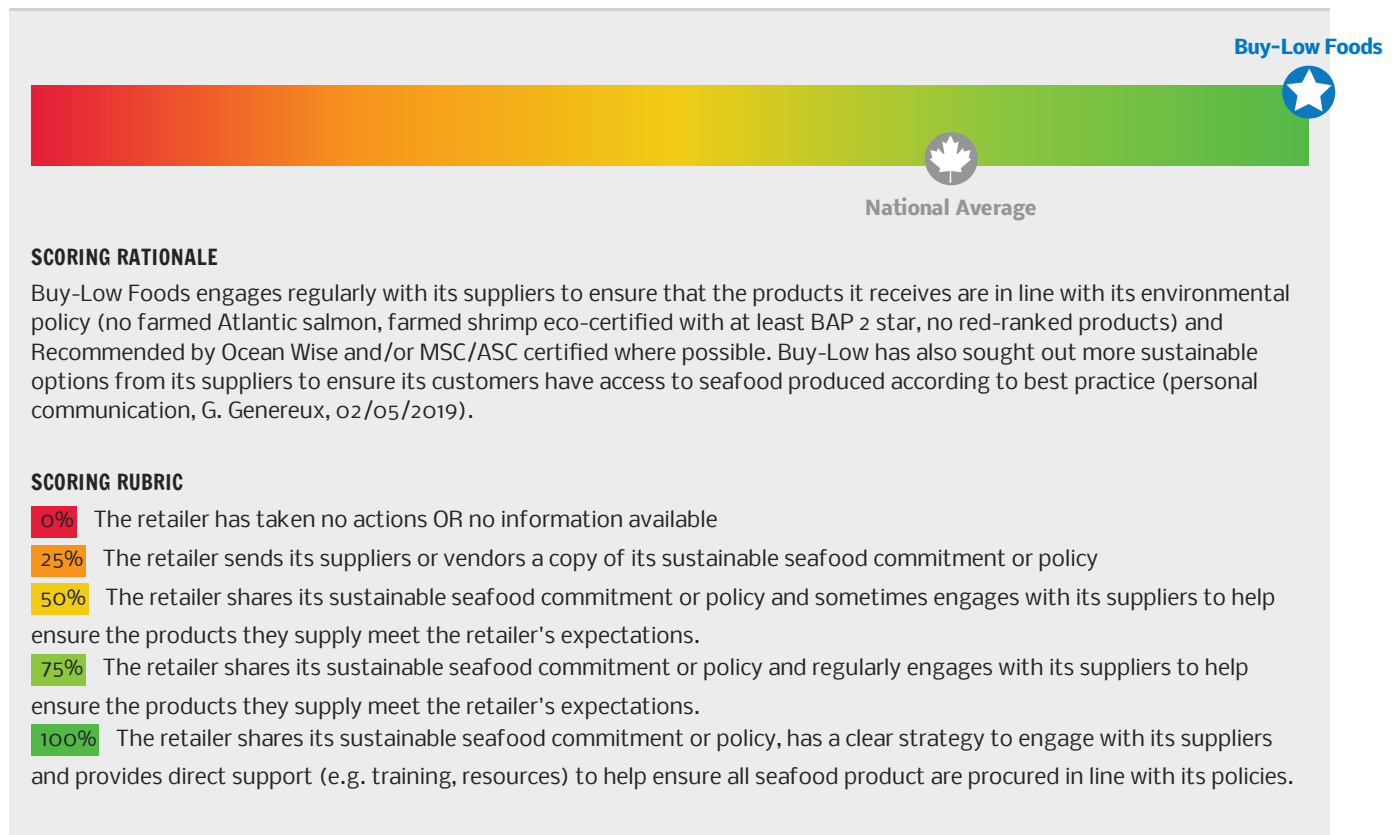
5.1 Training programs are conducted for seafood staff.



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



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



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



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

Buy-Low Foods



SCORING RATIONALE

- ✓ 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 Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- ✗ Preferentially procures farmed salmon from sources that are either Recommended by Ocean Wise or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- ✗ Preferentially sources from farms that are ASC certified
- ✗ Sourcing decisions also prioritize products with high levels of social responsibility and traceability

0%	Sells the product and does not support improvements by doing any of the actions listed or no information available
14%	Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement
26%	Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement
43%	Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement
57%	Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement
71%	Retailer is engaged in five improvement activities or doesn't sell the product
85%	Retailer is engaged in six 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?

Buy-Low Foods



National Average

SCORING RATIONALE

Buy-Low Foods preferentially sources ASC certified shrimps and prawns, and when those products are not available sources shrimps and prawns that are Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) 2-star (or more) certified. Buy-Low offers a wide range of Ocean Wise Recommended shrimp products and over half of its shrimp sold is Ocean Wise. Buy-Low Foods does not offer any red-ranked shrimp (personal communication, G. Genereux, 02/05/2018).

- ☒ 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)
- ☒ Outreach to policymakers to advocate for shrimp and prawn farming management to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially responsible
- ☒ Collaborating with other companies pre-competitively to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices
- ☒ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve shrimp and prawn farming practices
- ☒ Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- ☒ Preferentially procures shrimp and prawns from sources that are either Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- ☒ Preferentially sources from farms that are ASC or BAP certified
- ☒ 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 |
| 14% | Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement |
| 26% | Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement |
| 43% | Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement |
| 57% | Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement |
| 71% | Retailer is engaged in five actions to support improvement |
| 85% | Retailer is engaged in six 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?

Buy-Low Foods



National Average

SCORING RATIONALE

Buy-Low Foods is not currently engaged in any of the following 'Support Improvement' actions on skipjack tuna.

- ✗ Only sells skipjack tuna products that meet the highest bars for sustainability, i.e. are certified by MSC, Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Best Choice by Seafood Watch (100 pts)
- ✗ Outreach to policymakers to advocate for skipjack fishing methods and management to be more environmentally sustainable and/or socially responsible
- ✗ Collaborating with other companies pre-competitively to improve skipjack fishery management practices
- ✗ Works with suppliers or producers directly to improve skipjack fishing practices
- ✗ Refrains from advertising versions of this product that are Not Recommended by Ocean Wise and/or ranked Avoid by Seafood Watch
- ✗ Preferentially sources from more sustainable sources that are either Recommended by Ocean Wise or Best Choice by Seafood Watch
- ✗ Preferentially sources from fisheries that are MSC certified
- ✗ 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
- 14% Retailer is engaged in one action to support improvement
- 26% Retailer is engaged in two actions to support improvement
- 43% Retailer is engaged in three actions to support improvement
- 57% Retailer is engaged in four actions to support improvement
- 71% Retailer is engaged in five actions to support improvement
- 85% Retailer is engaged in six actions to support improvement
- 100% Retailer is engaged in all support improvement activities or doesn't sell the product

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

