

**SeaChoice.org**  
*for healthy oceans*

**#JoinTheShift**

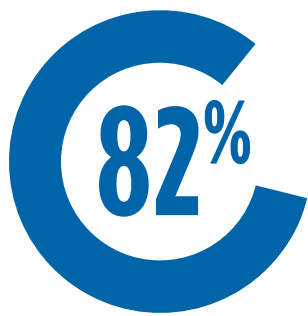
# RETAILER TOOLKIT



# SOURCING SUSTAINABLE, TRACEABLE, AND WELL-LABELLED SEAFOOD A RETAILER TOOLKIT

**Your customers want sustainable, traceable and well-labelled seafood in their grocery stores.**

Canadians demonstrated this most recently when, in the fall of 2018, over 3,200 people agreed to [#JoinTheShift](#)<sup>1</sup>, signing a letter asking their retailers to source sustainable, traceable and properly labelled seafood. In 2017, 12,705 Canadians signed a petition demanding better labelling of their seafood, and a [separate survey](#)<sup>2</sup> found that 82 per cent of over 3,000 Canadians agreed with the statement “all seafood sold in Canada should be labelled with information identifying the species, where it was caught, and how it was caught.” Canadians are not alone. Your customers’ values are consistent with a recent [worldwide study](#)<sup>3</sup> that showed consumers want to trust the fish they are eating - 70% of 25,810 consumers surveyed across 22 countries wanted to know more about the seafood they buy.



of Canadians surveyed agreed that **“all seafood sold in Canada should be labelled with information identifying the species, where it was caught, and how it was caught.”**

Sourcing sustainable and traceable seafood, and labelling it well, supports healthy, prosperous oceans and satisfied customers. It also offers you brand protection by mitigating the risks posed by sourcing environmentally and/or socially unsustainable, and even fraudulent, seafood.

**We have compiled this toolkit to support you in sourcing products that answer your customers’ call.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.seachoice.org/shift/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ecologyaction.ca/eoanalytics>

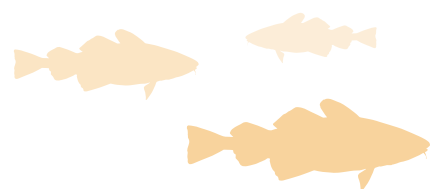
<sup>3</sup> <https://sustainablebrands.com/read/marketing-and-comms/study-consumers-want-to-trust-the-fish-they-are-eating>

## IT PAYS TO CHOOSE LOCAL

Efforts being made by many Canadian producers are making it ever more possible to put sustainable, traceable and properly labelled seafood in your stores. Fish from sustainable fisheries, even those that catch dozens of different species, can now be traced throughout the supply chain. However, without commitments by large retailers to support those producers and differentiate Canadian products through better labelling, Canadian seafood will stay out of reach for most Canadians.

**Your customers signing on to #JoinTheShift also asked you to preferentially choose local, Canadian, seafood.**



**IT'S TIME TO SHIFT HOW WE VALUE LOCAL FISH.**



# SUSTAINABLE

SeaChoice recommends sourcing seafood products that hold credible eco-labels to ensure they are sustainable. Sourcing these products increases the amount of sustainably caught or harvested seafood, reducing negative impacts to ocean ecosystems through robust resource management practices. **There are three different types of eco-labels: eco-certifications; rankings/recommendations; and self-claims.**

The following table provides an overview of these eco-labels, including their main advantages and disadvantages and what they are best used for.

	ECO-CERTIFICATIONS	RANKINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	SELF-CLAIMS
OVERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most common seafood eco-certifications in the Canadian market include <b>MSC</b><sup>4</sup> (for fisheries) and <b>ASC</b><sup>5</sup>, <b>BAP</b><sup>6</sup> (for aquaculture).</li> <li>Standards are developed and maintained with input from fisheries/farms, industry, experts and NGOs.</li> <li>Audits are carried out by independent certification bodies.</li> <li>Fisheries/farms often have to make improvements before, during and after certification in order to comply with the standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those most relevant to the Canadian market include <b>Seafood Watch</b><sup>7</sup> and <b>Ocean Wise</b><sup>8</sup>.</li> <li>SFW Standards are maintained with input from fisheries/farms, industry, experts and NGOs.</li> <li>Fisheries/farms are assessed against transparent standards resulting in an Avoid, Good Alternative or Best Choice ranking (Seafood Watch) or Recommended, Not Recommended (Ocean Wise).</li> <li>Rankings represent a snapshot of performance for a fishery/farm at one point in time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Represent a sourcing policy, or a set of sourcing standards, that refer to seafood eco-certifications, rankings and/or fisheries/aquaculture improvement projects (FIPs or AIPs) - OR they could refer to nothing at all, as some self-claims do not provide this information.</li> </ul>
MAIN ADVANTAGE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing consumer recognition at POS.</li> <li>Built-in chain of custody requirements give high confidence of traceability to the end buyer.</li> <li>Social sustainability considered to varying degrees across MSC, ASC, BAP.</li> <li>MSC/ASC require surveillance audits to ensure fisheries/farms are continuously meeting the standard.</li> <li>MSC/ASC audits are open to stakeholder comments; MSC Assessments are peer reviewed by experts (not the case for ASC/BAP).</li> <li>MSC/ASC's data availability allows for external oversight and monitoring &amp; evaluation of impacts on the water.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good consumer recognition at POS.</li> <li>Assessments are peer reviewed by experts and stakeholders.</li> <li>Ranking is non-voluntary, and includes the worst performers, so you can find out which seafood sources should be avoided.</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely to be a wide range of product availability due to inclusion of many sourcing criteria.</li> </ul> 
MAIN DISADVANTAGE(S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to nature of the certification process, there are costs involved for producers, which means the amount of products certified is currently limited, but growing.</li> <li>The BAP audit process does not engage stakeholders, audits and data are not made publicly available, and there are no surveillance audits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No built-in traceability requirements.</li> <li>Do not consider social sustainability.</li> <li>Assessments updated infrequently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be independently verified.</li> <li>Some lack a clear sustainability policy.</li> <li>Multiple sourcing criteria could reduce certainty that each batch of products meets retailers' sourcing commitments.</li> </ul>
BEST USED FOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing procurement decisions in line with your sustainable seafood commitments.</li> <li>Having certainty, due to chain of custody requirements, that the products you are sourcing are what they say they are.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informing procurement decisions in line with your sustainable seafood commitments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand recognition at POS if the sourcing standards for that product are in line with your sustainable seafood commitments.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.msc.org/>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.bapcertification.org/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.asc-aqua.org/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.seafoodwatch.org/>

<sup>8</sup><http://seafood.ocean.org/>

As the table above shows, not all eco-labels are created equally. You should consider the following when using eco-labels to source seafood:

- The aspects along the supply chain that are looked at in the context of the eco-label - i.e. production (fisheries/farm performance) and/or processing.
- The scope of sustainability criteria they include - i.e. environmental, social.
- The existence of traceability requirements.
- Price and availability of products.
- POS recognition by consumers.

SeaChoice considers eco-certified products from Aquaculture Stewardship Council<sup>9</sup> (**ASC**) and Marine Stewardship Council<sup>10</sup> (**MSC**) to be best practice eco-labels. In addition to being based on strong standards, they are unique among eco-labels in having accreditation bodies that qualify and oversee the certification companies, membership in the **ISEAL Alliance**<sup>11</sup>, and strong traceability requirements. When it comes to traceability, both ASC and MSC require chain of custody to enable seafood products to be traced back to their sources along the supply chain. Preferentially sourcing these eco-certifications will help to increase the amount of sustainably produced and trustworthy products in your stores.

It is important to note that while these eco-certifications are your best bet for sourcing sustainable seafood, they have their challenges, particularly when it comes to improving the rigour of their standards and ensuring the standards are applied as written across fisheries/farms. This is why SeaChoice sits on advisory boards, participates in standard and audit submissions, and conducts research to review their performance in Canada and around the world. You can find out more about our proactive engagement with eco-certifications to ensure they remain credible and implement stringent standards [here](https://www.seachoice.org/our-work/eco-labels/)<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.asc-aqua.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.msc.org/home>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.isealliance.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.seachoice.org/our-work/eco-labels/>

## RESOURCES

How to find certified/ranked products:

### FISHCHOICE [fishchoice.com](https://fishchoice.com)

FishChoice helps businesses find sustainable seafood by aggregating and curating sustainable seafood information, ratings and certifications into a single platform.

### FISHSOURCE [fishsource.com](https://fishsource.com)

FishSource compiles and summarizes scientific and technical information about the status of fisheries and aquaculture production (including FIPs and AIPs) to help inform businesses' purchasing decisions.

### FISHERY PROGRESS [fisheryprogress.com](https://fisheryprogress.com)

Fishery Progress has information on the progress of fishery improvement projects around the world, e.g. are they basic or comprehensive, making good progress or negligible process, or completed.



# TRACEABLE

SeaChoice recommends taking the steps to begin incorporating robust traceability systems into your seafood supply chains to improve labelling, comply with international market requirements, improve health and safety practices, and ensure products are not associated with negative fishing or labour practices. It is important to note that full-chain traceability systems require whole supply chain involvement and cannot be achieved by just one actor - **retailers should preferentially source seafood products that are traceable to their source fishery or farm.**

In this section we have compiled a variety of resources to support you toward full-chain traceability and have outlined some of the traceability providers available in Canada.



## RESOURCES

### FIRST STEPS TOWARDS FULL-CHAIN TRACEABILITY:

Learn about taking the first steps towards full-chain traceability with **a guide**<sup>13</sup> created by FishWise, Global Food Traceability Center and WWF. This document provides resources, information and addresses commonly asked questions from the seafood industry about traceability.

**DEMYSTIFYING TRACEABILITY:** Take the “Demystifying traceability” **course**<sup>14</sup> offered by the Global Food Traceability Center. The course covers the ins and outs of traceability for all levels of industry in the food supply chain. The course includes a helpful guide to help your business prioritize products most in need of robust traceability and how to do it.

**FINANCIAL RESOURCES:** Funded under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, two new BC funding programs aim to improve traceability in agriculture, agri-food and seafood businesses. The two programs vary slightly, one is for individual businesses and the other is aimed at groups of businesses. More information on the program and how to apply can be found **here**<sup>15</sup>.

The Global Food Traceability Center has an interactive tool that allows businesses to assess the financial impact (i.e. return on investment, market opportunities, labour costs, increased margins etc.) of implementing traceability. Get started **here**<sup>16</sup>.

**INDUSTRY SUCCESS:** Read information and testimonials from seafood industry actors who have successfully implemented traceability within their business **here**<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> [http://futureoffish.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/OSMI-first-steps\\_March2018.pdf](http://futureoffish.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/OSMI-first-steps_March2018.pdf)





<sup>14</sup> <https://ift-onlinelearning.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://bctraceability.outcome-plus.com/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://seafoodtraceability.org/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/fish\\_stories\\_report\\_hi-res.pdf](https://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/fish_stories_report_hi-res.pdf)

To get you started, the following table describes some seafood relevant full-chain traceability providers available in Canada.

PROVIDER	DESCRIPTION	TECHNOLOGY
	<b>Vericatch</b> combines two electronic platforms, FisheriesApp and KnowYour.Fish, to provide producers with effective electronic data capture and reporting, and supply chain actors the ability to trace information all along the supply chain to satisfy consumer demand.	Uses an online database where information is captured and updated along the supply chain with an attached unique, brandable and marketable catch ID that enables access to specific information about individual products (who caught it, where it came from, its sustainability rankings).  <a href="http://knowyour.fish">knowyour.fish</a>
	<b>This Fish</b> is a web-based tool that allows producers and supply chain actors to create an online profile and upload data on catches so it can be traced to the consumer. Provides information on the product, fishers/ producers, vessel, processors, buyers, location and harvest type.	Uses unique codes and QR codes to identify and trace fish from point of harvest right through to consumer.  <a href="http://thisfish.info">thisfish.info</a>
	<b>Trace Register</b> is an electronic traceability software platform and analytical tool that allows companies to track and manage traceability information with customization abilities.	Uses QR codes to direct consumers to a web page containing information on the product they are purchasing.  <a href="http://traceregister.com">traceregister.com</a>
	<b>Traceall Global</b> is a monitoring system that allows supply chain actors to capture data on location, temperature, environmental conditions and more. They have a suit of fish traceability and monitoring solutions that enable retailers and consumers to access key data at anytime.	Uses barcode and radio-frequency identification technology to track products along the supply chain.  <a href="http://traceallglobal.com/tracking-tracing.html">traceallglobal.com/tracking-tracing.html</a>

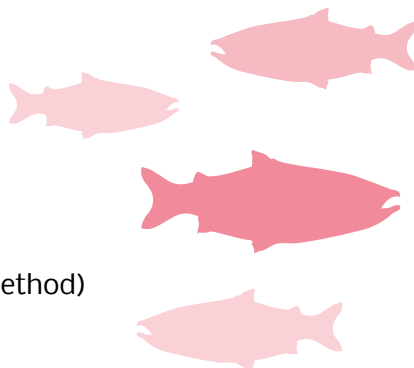
# WELL-LABELLED

As a result of Canada's new Safe Food for Canadians regulations<sup>18</sup> requiring 'one-up, one-down' traceability, the seafood industry is now mandated to pass information along the supply chain. One-up, one-down, is still a business to business form of traceability. Consumers will continue to be uninformed about the origin of their seafood or how it was produced. As a retailer you will need to ask your suppliers to provide key pieces of information and maintain these along the supply chain so they may be displayed on a product label.

SeaChoice recommends providing the following six pieces of information to ensure your seafood product labels meet global best practices that consumers are looking for and to match international regulatory requirements.

## Six key pieces of information are required for best practice seafood labelling:

- 1 **Scientific name**
- 2 **Common name**
- 3 **Geographic origin**
- 4 **Country of processing**
- 5 **Production method**  
(wild or farmed)
- 6 **Harvest method**  
(gear type or farming method)



## REPORT CARD

Basic Elements of Seafood Labelling

Scientific Name	✓	✗	✗
Common Name	✓	✓	✓
Geographic Origin	✓	✗	✗
Country of Last Major Transformation/Processing	✓	✓	✓
Production Method (Farmed or Wild)	✓	✓	✗
Harvest Method	✓	✗	✗

**GRADE** A D F

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

## RESOURCES

SeaChoice encourages retailers to voluntarily put more information on their seafood labels than is required under Canadian regulations, to increase transparency, build consumer trust, and follow best practice. We have developed labelling guidelines to support these efforts - available for download [here](#)<sup>19</sup>.

Find out why better product labels matter below and in our report "Canadians Eating in the Dark: A Report Card of International Seafood Labelling Requirements", available [here](#)<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2018-108/index.html>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.seachoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/SeaChoice-seafood-labelling-guidelines.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.seachoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Seafood-Labelling-Report-Online.pdf>

# WHY IT MATTERS



**SCIENTIFIC NAME** - The use of a species' scientific name ensures greater clarity. Common names can apply to many 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 and variety of acceptable common names on the French CFIA Fish List is different than the English list.



**GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN** - 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 labeled as a product of the export country (called “Country of Origin”), even though it was caught or farmed in Canada. This can be misleading, especially as each country and each body of water has different sustainability and quality control practices.



**PRODUCTION METHOD (Farmed or Wild)** - 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, and can help differentiate very different seafood products.



**GEAR TYPE OR FARMING METHOD** - The gear type for wild-caught seafood can have different impacts on the ocean floor and 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.





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