

Consumers expect sustainable seafood. Are retailers up to the challenge?

Seafood Progress shows Canada's nine largest food retailers are improving

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 3, 2019

VANCOUVER — It's getting easier to make sustainable seafood choices, thanks to co-operation between Canadian retailers and Seafood Progress, an online reporting program run by SeaChoice. For its second year of assessments, Seafood Progress noted scores for transparency and accountability improved for many of Canada's largest food retailers. METRO, Loblaw and Save-On Foods received the highest overall scores, with METRO showing the greatest year-to-year improvement.

Seafood Progress provides insight into what Canada's largest retailers are doing to support sustainable seafood. Two new retailers, Sobeys and Safeway, provided information to Seafood Progress about sustainable seafood commitments over the past year, bringing aboard all but one of Canada's nine major food retailers.

"People expect retailers to sell sustainable seafood and have been using Seafood Progress to learn about their retailer's policy," said SeaChoice seafood supply chain analyst Liane Veitch. "Seafood Progress is bringing Canadian retail practices to light, and its second-year results demonstrate positive changes in retailer transparency and performance."

Seven retailers disclosed how much of the seafood covered under their policies met their sustainability objectives in the recent past. This indicator was one of the top three to improve most, underlining better transparency among retailers. Along with a responsible sourcing indicator, this shows consumers how much change they are driving in the seafood supply chain.

There is room for further progress. Public disclosure of procurement information continues to be a sticking point. Only METRO and Walmart Canada are currently disclosing the geographic origin and gear type for many of their seafood products. Unfortunately, Canada's poor seafood labelling laws put the onus for full transparency on retailers.

Retailers have made significant progress in offering better environmental choices for seafood but remain in muddy waters on fisheries and aquaculture improvements for the most problematic species in their supply chains. Efforts to support improvements through policy reforms and enhancement projects remain the weakest assessment area in the program.

"We're disappointed that retailers didn't advance further in their support for improvements for specific seafood categories," said Bill Wareham, SeaChoice representative and David Suzuki Foundation science projects manager. "Commodities such as farmed salmon, farmed shrimp and skipjack tuna are often produced in unsustainable ways and are sold in huge quantities in Canada. We hope that over the next year retailers will focus on ways to improve these items' sustainability in their supply chains."

Seafood Progress also highlights that some seafood products might come with potential human rights abuses. While retailers want to ensure socially responsible production, many documented instances have been found of egregious human rights violations on fishing vessels, in aquaculture facilities and in processing plants. Retailers need to step up their efforts. Some show no evidence of trying to address these issues and others are struggling to find methods to do so.

Until governments worldwide start properly managing fish stocks and ensuring human rights, retailers will remain some of the strongest influencers. They must continue to raise the ambition and scope of their policies to meet the level of sustainability customers expect. While Seafood Progress assesses retailer performance against a retailer's own policies, the program reveals that not all policies are equal. Many customers assume that if a retailer has a sustainable seafood policy, it covers all products to ensure legal production, thriving fisheries and healthy ecosystems, but this is not necessarily the case.

"One thing Seafood Progress helps make clear is how much, or little, of a retailer's seafood offerings are covered by its policies," Veitch said. "In addition to incentivizing further progress against existing commitments, SeaChoice will work with retailers to expand the scope of commitments that should cover all seafood a retailer sells. In this way, we can help the oceans and the seafood industry have healthier futures."

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SeaChoice:

SeaChoice is a collaboration of three internationally recognized organizations — the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre and Living Oceans Society — that use their broad, national expertise to find solutions for healthy oceans. SeaChoice is a science-based, solutions-focused influencer, advocate and watchdog leading the next evolution of seafood sustainability in Canada. SeaChoice is a member organization of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions, and works with consumers, retailers, suppliers, government and producers to accomplish its objectives.

Backgrounder:

Seafood Progress landing page and retailer profile links: www.seafoodprogress.org **NOTE that retailer's profile updates will be available to view on Tuesday July 2 at 12:00 PST

SeaChoice will be publishing a short report on the results of the Year 2; it is available in advance at this link: <https://www.seachoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Seafood-Progress-Year-2-results-report-FINAL.pdf>

SeaChoice's Priority Species includes farmed Atlantic salmon (in BC, [link](#), and in Atlantic Canada, [link](#)) farmed shrimp ([link](#)) and skipjack tuna ([link](#)).

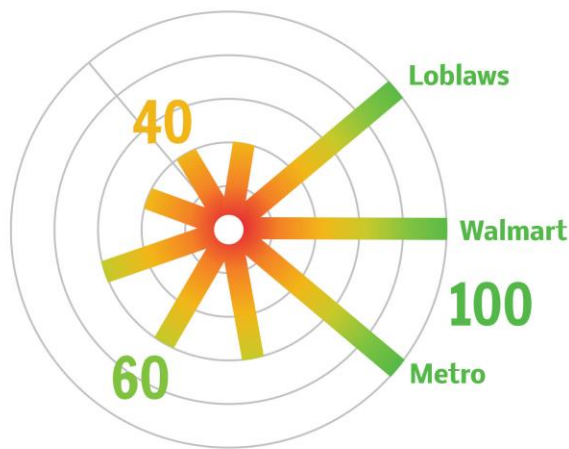
More information about the methodology used to create Seafood Progress:
<https://www.seachoice.org/seafood-progress/methodology/>

The Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions' Common Vision for Sustainable Seafood:
<https://solutionsforseafood.org/resources/common-vision/>

Infographics (please contact [Liane Veitch](#) if you would like full resolution copies of the infographics)

KPI 1.2 (9 MAJOR RETAILERS)

Retailer has a publicly available commitment or policy to source more socially responsible seafood



KPI 4.4 (9 MAJOR RETAILERS)

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

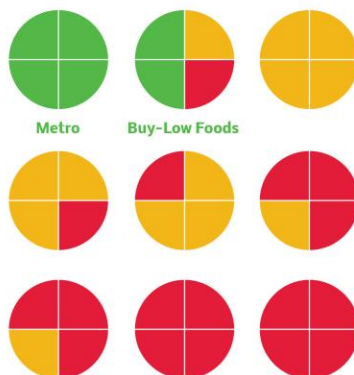


KPI 4.1 (RESULTS FOR 9 MAJOR RETAILERS)

Retailer labels products with the information that allows consumers to make informed decisions

Species Latin name	Country of origin
Wild or farmed	Gear type or farming methods

● = ALL PRODUCTS ● = SOME PRODUCTS
● = NO PRODUCTS



NATIONAL AVERAGES OUT OF 100

