

Best Practice Seafood Labelling: A RETAILER TOOLKIT







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BEST PRACTICE SEAFOOD LABELLING: A RETAILER TOOLKIT

As the demand for transparency rises, your customers are looking to product labels for **more detailed information**, such as the sustainability or provenance of a product. Retailers who are meeting this demand are driving revenue growth and fulfilling buyers' expectations; those that aren't risk losing market share, investor confidence and customer loyalty.

This toolkit shows how you can achieve well-labelled seafood products and how a robust traceability system can support better labelling.



C NAMING SEAFOOD PRODUCTS

Allowed common names for seafood products in Canada are often vague or can be misleading to consumers (for example, the allowed common name 'sole' can be used for 22 species, several of which are actually species of flounder). Furthermore, for many species, there is no internationally agreed upon market name, which can create confusion and potential mislabelling for retailers. The scientific name on a label in addition to the common name is recognized internationally as a way to reduce the risk of mislabelling and support traceability through the supply chain.

GUIDANCE FOR USING BEST PRACTICE COMMON NAMES

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) maintains a database to provide guidance for the naming of seafood products, called the **Fish List**. You can use the Fish List to see the suggested common name(s) of the species you are looking to label.

CHOOSING A COMMON NAME USING THE FISH LIST:

1 🗶 Click here to access the database

2 Enter the scientific name of the species in the search bar, click on "Scientific Names" from the list of options and press submit. **CFIA** Fish List

Last Update: 2020/08/06 Click here for help



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 Scroll through the results and choose an English and/or French common name that is permitted for the species.
We strongly encourage you to use the most descriptive or specific common name available, as opposed to vague or generic names like "tuna" and "shrimp".

Lookup Results of CFIA Fish List



S It is important to know the scientific name first, because looking up a generic common name will often result in many different species listed and thus a potential risk for mislabelling.

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SPECIES (SCIENTIFIC NAME)	SEACHOICE COMMON NAME RECOMMENDATION	VAGUE/MISLEADING COMMON NAME TO AVOID
Gadus macrocephalus	Pacific cod	Cod
Gadus morhua	Atlantic cod	Cod
Hippoglossus hippoglossus	Atlantic halibut	Halibut
Limanda ferruginea	Yellowtail flounder	Sole
Sander vitreus	Walleye	Pickerel
Mytilus edulis	Blue mussel	Mussel
Pandalus borealis	Northern shrimp	Shrimp
Oncorhynchus mykiss	Rainbow trout or steelhead trout	Trout
Oncorhynchus nerka	Sockeye salmon	Red salmon
Salmo salar	Atlantic salmon	Salmon
Sebastes alutus	Pacific ocean perch	Rockfish
Sebastes fasciatus	Acadian redfish	Redfish
Sebastes ruberrimus	Yelloweye rockfish	Snapper
Katsuwonus pelamis	Skipjack tuna*	Tuna
Thunnus alalunga	Albacore tuna*	Tuna

*Skipjack and albacore tuna in cans must indicate the colour of the flesh under Health Canada's regulations. SeaChoice suggests including the recommended common name in addition to this required text on the can.













GUIDANCE FOR INCLUDING SCIENTIFIC NAMES

In most cases, suppliers should be able to give you the scientific name of the seafood product. In some cases, suppliers might need to adjust their traceability system and/or work with producers to ensure adequate sorting of species from catch through processing.

Once you know the scientific name, SeaChoice suggests it is placed in a small, italicized font under or beside the common name.



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UWILD OR FARMED & METHOD OF HARVEST

Differentiating between wild-caught and farmed seafood is an important piece of information for consumers, especially since some species are both farmed and wild caught (e.g. shrimp, mussels, sablefish, salmon). The gear types used for wild-caught seafood can have different impacts on the ocean ecosystem (e.g., damage to the ocean floor, bycatch of unwanted species, etc.) and different farming methods can have varying impacts on the surrounding environment and the wild species found there.

GUIDANCE FOR METHOD OF HARVEST LABELLING

SeaChoice recommends labelling all seafood products as either caught or farmed and then the specific method of harvest. The table below outlines the most common harvest methods for seafood and SeaChoice's suggested options for describing the method on a product label.

	HARVEST METHOD	HOW TO DISPLAY ON LABEL	DESCRIPTION		
MILD	Handline or pole-and-line	Handline / Pole-and-line	Handlines or pole and line consist of a single line and hook (with or without a rod) operated by a fisher or mechanically. Species typically harvested are skipjack tuna and albacore tuna , as well as finfish species .		
	Longline	Specify the type of longline: Pelagic longline / Bottom longline	Longlines are composed of a main line with lines branching off it, ending with baited hooks. Two common types are drifting/pelagic longlines (those supported by floats in the water column) and demersal/bottom longlines (those weighed and pinned to the sea floor). Species typically harvested are tunas , cod and halibut .		
	Purse seines	Specify the type of purse seine: FAD-set purse seine / Free school purse seine	Purse seines are large nets deployed by boat and then pulled by the fishers to draw together the net, like a drawstring, trapping the fish inside. Fishers may or may not use fish aggregating devices (FAD). This method is common for tunas, mackerel, herring, sardines and anchovies .		
	Traps	Trap or specific type of trap: Pot / Wier	Traps are immobile enclosures placed on the bottom of the ocean, lake or river. There are a variety of types of traps including pots, weirs, and crab rings. They are typically used for crabs and lobsters .		
	Trawls	Specify the type of trawl: Midwater trawl / Bottom trawl / Pair trawl / Otter trawl	Trawls are nets that are held open with floats or weights and towed by boat though the water column (pelagic or midwater trawls) or along the seafloor (bottom or demersal trawls). Species typically harvested are finfish like Atlantic cod and haddock as well as forage fish like herring .		
	Towed dredge	Towed dredge / Dredge	Some dredges are towed along the seafloor, while others are used to penetrate the seafloor. They are commonly used to harvest scallops , mussels and oysters .		
FARMED	Off-bottom culture	Off-bottom culture or specific method: Floating bags / Ropes	Off-bottom culture is used for shellfish that are grown using floating bags or suspended ropes.		
	Open net pen	Open net pen / Marine net pen	Net pens are structures which hold farmed fish suspended in open water while still allowing water to flow through the pens. Species typically harvested are Atlantic salmon and striped bass .		
	Ponds	Ponds	Ponds are naturally occurring or man-made bodies of fresh or salt water to grow fish or shellfish. Species often harvested are tiger shrimp , catfish and tilapia .		
	Recirculating aquaculture system (RAS)	Recirculating aquaculture system	RAS are land-based farming operations that grow fish and shellfish in tanks with a continuous flow of water. They are typically used for rainbow trout , arctic char , sturgeon and Atlantic salmon .		



It is important to ask your supplier for this information and to be specific about the method on the label. For other harvest methods not included in this chart, please refer to this page:

seafood.ocean.org/seafood/harvest-methods/

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In addition to displaying the "country of origin" on a seafood label, shown as "product of (the country of last major transformation)" (as required for all imported products), SeaChoice recommends adding where the seafood was actually caught or farmed.





Please watch **this video** to learn why labelling the provenance of seafood is so important.

GUIDANCE FOR PROVENANCE LABELLING

For a species that was farmed, provide at least the country the farm is located and if possible the province or state as well.

Example: Farmed in Ontario, Canada

For a species that was wild-caught, provide the name of the area where it was caught and the country where it was landed. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations provides an internationally recognized **list of areas** for accurately naming major fishing areas.

Example: Caught in the Northwest Atlantic, Canada

If the fish was caught in freshwater, display the name of the water body (i.e., the name of the lake), the country and the province or state if applicable.

Example: Caught in Moose Lake, Manitoba, Canada.









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SEAFOOD TRACEABILITY IS KEY TO PROPER LABELLING

Traceability is a critical tool to ensure the information you are supplying on the label is correct. For example, in addition to ensuring health and safety requirements are met, a proper traceability system will verify the species, the catch location and the gear used if set up to do so. If you have not begun to implement robust traceability systems into your supply chains, SeaChoice recommends taking the necessary steps to do so.

ACTIONS YOU COULD TAKE RIGHT NOW

- In your purchasing specification, clearly identify the species you want to receive using the scientific name.
- Request a letter of guarantee from your supplier.
- Utilize technology such as DNA testing to conduct randomized testing for species verification.
- Cross-check the name of the species you ordered with what is shown on the receipt or invoice.



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Please contact SeaChoice for more information.

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