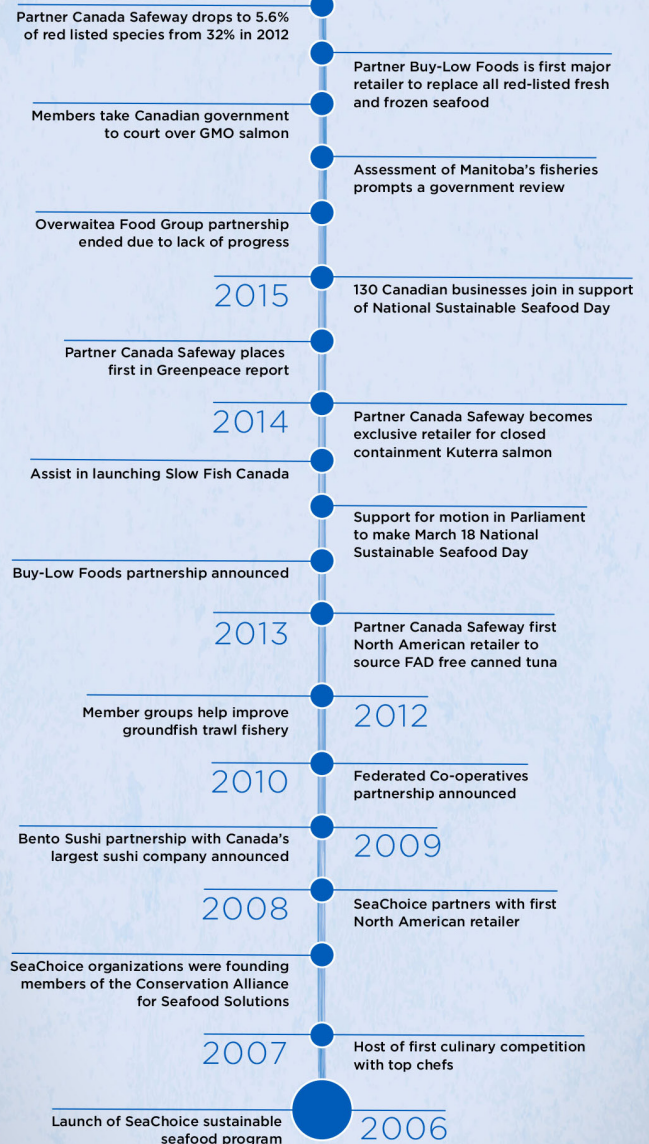
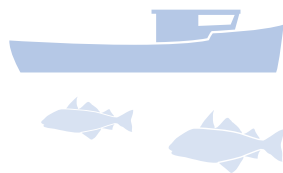


SeaChoice is a national program that helps Canadian businesses and consumers make the most sustainable seafood choices to support the long-term health of our ocean and coastal communities. We bring together national experts from a variety of conservation organizations, and work with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program to provide science-based fishery and aquaculture sustainability rankings.

Practices and products change over time, and so the focus of our work also changes. We wanted to take this opportunity to let you know about some of the new themes, as well as specific fisheries, we will be focusing on over the coming year, both as SeaChoice and as member organizations.

## SEACHOICE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD SUCCESS!

SeaChoice was created in 2006 to help Canadian businesses and seafood lovers support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture throughout the supply chain. The SeaChoice program is operated by the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecology Action Centre and Living Oceans Society, all of which are active members of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions. Huge strides have been made in sustainable seafood work over the past decade and many groups have contributed to these sustainable seafood gains. Our timeline celebrates some of our proudest successes over the past ten years!



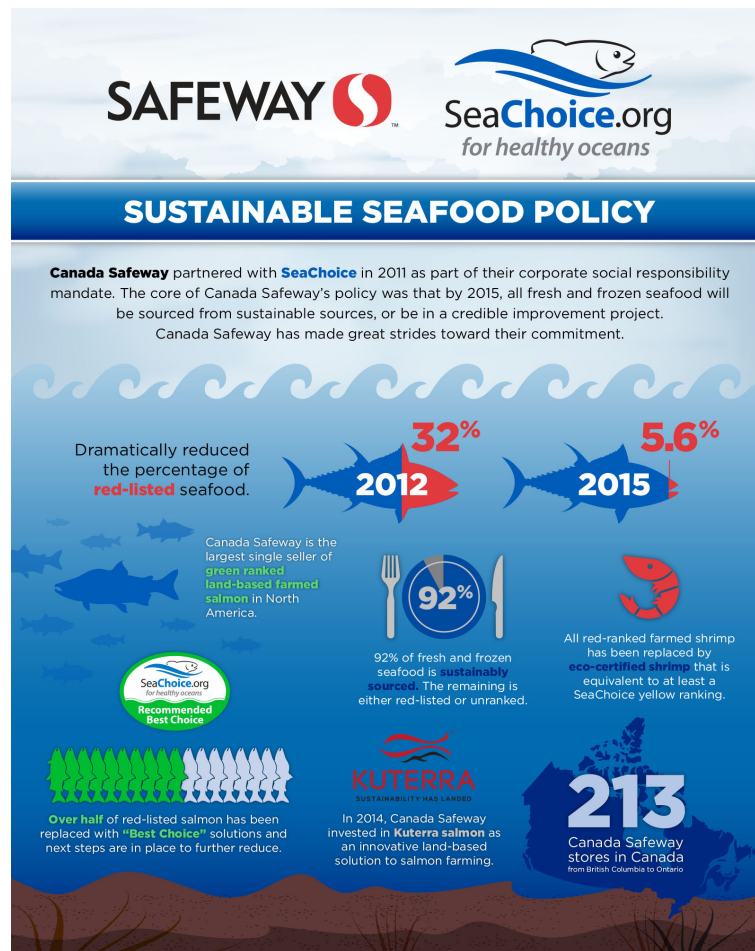
# Canada Safeway receives an A+ on seafood sustainability

In 2011, Canada Safeway made an important commitment to shift their procurement of fresh and frozen seafood to sustainable sources. Over the past five years Canada Safeway has worked diligently towards this goal and 92 per cent of seafood sold was from sustainable sources as of the end of 2015. This marks a large improvement from 2012 where only 51 per cent of seafood sold met Safeway's commitment.

Canada Safeway partnered with SeaChoice in 2011 as part of their corporate social responsibility mandate. The core of Canada Safeway's policy stated that by 2015, all fresh and frozen seafood will be sourced from sustainable sources, or be in a credible improvement project.

SeaChoice congratulates Canada Safeway for achieving 92 per cent of their seafood commitment. Many red-listed species including Russian king crab, shark, barramundi, and squid have been completely eliminated, leaving only a few species such as salmon and rockfish. The transition of remaining red-listed species is well underway – red-ranked farmed salmon is being replaced by green ranked land-based farmed Kuterra salmon and Safeway is working towards only

sourcing yellow ranked Canadian rockfish. Canada Safeway has made great progress by investing in innovative solutions to complex seafood issues and we are pleased to have concrete next steps in removing the remaining 8 per cent of unranked and red-listed seafood. With locations from British Columbia to Ontario, SeaChoice encourages Canadians to support their efforts to procure seafood more responsibly.

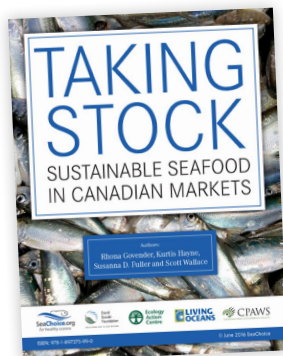




In support of National Sustainable Seafood Day, SeaChoice joined Chef Ned Bell in hosting a sustainable seafood lunch for Canada's Premiers. Visit [www.chefsforoceans.com](http://www.chefsforoceans.com) to help support dedicating March 18 as Canada's National Sustainable Seafood Day.

## SeaChoice releases Canada's first comprehensive sustainable seafood study

On World Oceans Day, SeaChoice released the first major assessment of the sustainability of all of Canada's seafood imports and exports. The report, *Taking Stock: Sustainable Seafood in Canadian Markets*, is part of SeaChoice's work to promote and highlight sustainable seafood choices in Canadian grocery stores.



### The report found:

- Weak government labelling and traceability requirements have made Canadian seafood assessments impossible for many species.
- Tropical farmed shrimp, farmed open net-pen salmon and skipjack tuna caught with harmful gear were the top three "red-listed" or "avoid" fish imported into Canada (by volume).
- Open net-pen Atlantic salmon is Canada's most exported red-listed fish.
- Only 16 per cent of the seafood produced in Canada is considered "Best Choice" by SeaChoice.

## Key recommendations include:

### 1) To improve seafood sustainability tracking in Canada and the effectiveness of market-based approaches:

- Canada should require government agencies to improve seafood labelling and reporting of fisheries and aquaculture products by requiring species-level identifications.
- ENGOs assisting with sustainable seafood procurements should adopt a shared data gathering tool to track program effectiveness.

### 2) To eliminate red-ranked seafood and increase availability of green-ranked seafood as well as address human rights abuses in seafood production:

- Canadian retailers, food-service companies and restaurants should continue to avoid buying red-ranked seafood.
- Canada should support traceability requirements as a part of sustainability assessments and examine human rights abuses in the seafood supply chain.
- Focus should be on improving practices or restricting imports from red-ranked fisheries within and outside of Canada.

### 3) To ensure that eco-certification programs are credible, aligned with Canadian law and policy and result in improved fisheries sustainability, including impacts on target species and impacts of fishing on the ecosystem, we recommend:

- Canadian fisheries certified by the MSC meet conditions within a reasonable timeframe, with MSC conditions that are consistent with Canadian laws and policies relating to sustainable fisheries and marine biodiversity protection, and with a particular focus on species assessed by COSEWIC and considered at risk.
- ASC certifications, particularly with reference to the Salmon Standard, should not undermine wild salmon management and must uphold a high standard for disease and pathogen control.





Photo: Grant Stirton

## Coming Soon to a Grocer Near You: GM Salmon in the Canadian Marketplace?

On May 19th, 2016 Health Canada announced it was approving genetically modified (GM) salmon for human consumption without any provisions for labelling, which would allow consumers to identify it in the stores, and differentiate it from other types of salmon.

The first GM salmon is slated to be for sale Canadian stores within eighteen months. But there is no guarantee that there will be a market for this product. Recent polling by the [Canadian Biotechnology Action Network](#) found that six in ten Canadians oppose genetically modifying food and nine out of ten Canadians want to see genetically modified food labelled as such. Canada's existing aquaculture industry, which largely grows finfish in open net pens, is not embracing the new technology of GM salmon either. They want to see consumer demand for GM salmon before their producers take the risk of growing it in their operations.

Nova Scotia's Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Keith Colwell, said the province would not allow GM salmon to be grown there. His quote in news reports was, *"We're more interested in making sure we protect what we have. Until someone can prove to us and to the public that this will be a good idea – and I don't see much support anywhere for this – we're not interested."*

Many seafood certification bodies do not support GM salmon because the risks to wild populations of salmon are unknown. Many Atlantic salmon populations in Canada (and elsewhere) are considered endangered by the Committee on the Status of Wildlife in Canada due to low population levels caused by historic overfishing and ongoing habitat loss. Genetically modified salmon poses additional risks, as escaped GM salmon could out-compete wild salmon for food and interfere with breeding, reducing wild populations even further.

SeaChoice is working with retailers on a pledge not to source genetically modified salmon. We hope it has the same reach as a similar campaign in the United States (the only other place GM salmon was approved), where nearly 80 retailers have signed on representing over 11,000 stores.

## Nova Scotian Shrimp: Small-Scale Fishers get “Best Choice” Ranking



Chedabucto Bay trap-caught shrimp are a sustainable, Canadian option, and have been given international recognition after receiving a top assessment from Seafood Watch and “Best Choice” rating from SeaChoice. This small fishery based out of Canso, Nova Scotia, has been in operation for nearly two decades, and is finally being recognized for their sustainable efforts in the Atlantic shrimp fishing industry.

Though shrimp is one of the most consumed seafood products in North America, local and sustainable options in Canada are much less available than imported, unsustainable, tropical shrimp. Many people don't realize that Canada's Atlantic shores have rich shrimp populations, and that Canada is the

largest cold-water shrimp exporter in the world. Unfortunately, we export most of this high-quality, cold water Canadian shrimp to Europe, Asia, and the US, and import low-quality, tropical shrimp from Asia.

The trap-caught shrimp from Chedabucto Bay is a great example of how shrimp fishing can be done sustainably, and profit the local community. With only 8 active licenses, the trap fishery catches 8 per cent of the shrimp quota in the region, but is estimated to contribute more than \$700,000 per year to the livelihoods of fisherman in Canso.

Using modified lobster traps, the fishers have negligible incidental catch, and have little impact on the ocean floor. They also don't have to travel too far offshore for their catch – typically no further than a mile, allowing local fishers to save money on fuel, and bring more profit to their communities. The rest of the quota in the region, however, is reserved for trawled shrimp, which typically has a larger environmental impact. Trawlers typically have a larger impact on the surrounding environment, with large numbers of bycatch, and indiscriminate damage to the sea floor and benthic habitats.

SeaChoice and member group the Ecology Action Centre are working with the fishery, processors, and other supply chain actors to ensure that this Nova Scotian shrimp is properly labelled in the market, and that more of it remains here in Canada next season. Let's promote local, sustainable, small-scale fishers, and lessen our dependence on imported shrimp that is more environmentally harmful.



## Experimental Commercial Diver Scallop Fishery a “Go” in Nova Scotia

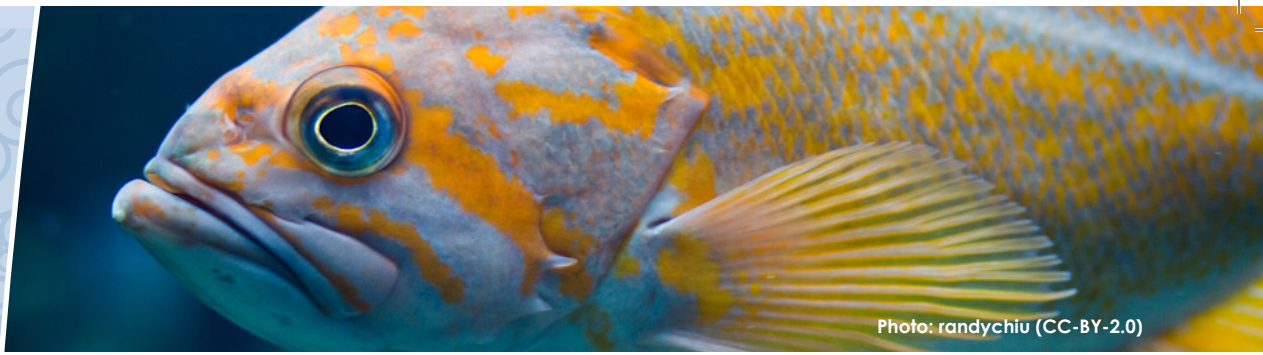
After almost five years of ongoing work by the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and local community members, scallop fishermen and urchin fishermen, an experimental commercial diver caught scallop fishery in the Bay of Fundy has been approved for summer 2016 by Fisheries & Oceans Canada (DFO).

An existing licence holder has agreed to allocate 2.5 tonnes of quota that would normally be fished by scallop dredge, to be fished by a local team of commercial diver fishermen, who also commercially fish for urchins. The change to the existing license to allow for a different gear type had to be first approved by the Inshore Scallop Advisory Committee, before finally being approved by DFO. This fishery is only happening because of ongoing communication and collaboration by the license holder, the divers, the EAC staff, DFO staff and members of the Inshore Scallop Advisory Committee and is an important example of how change can happen in Canadian fisheries through information sharing and collaboration.

The change in how scallops are fished for the fishery, to meet growing demand for diver caught scallops, to engage a new way of fishing and will contribute to sustainable livelihoods and economic development in the region. Divers have the ability to harvest scallops one at a time, leaving large brooders and undersized species without causing environmental damage.

The EAC has been working with various value chain members—from processors to retailers—to ensure that there is a demand for this product. So far, the demand has been so high for scallops that retailers have committed to buying the scallops for several years. This pilot project will be evaluated in the fall of 2016 with the goal of allowing more scallops to be fished by diver in coming years.





## Rockfish, Seafood Labelling and Traceability

In our last emerging issues bulletin we highlighted the issue that, at the time, newly yellow-ranked rockfish was not separated from the remaining red-ranked rockfish in most seafood supply-chains. All species of trawl caught rockfish were in most cases being marketed as generic snapper or rockfish, despite there being many different species caught of varying levels of sustainability and quality. This made it difficult for seafood buyers and consumers to source the more sustainable species of rockfish even if they wanted to. Since then, SeaChoice has begun work with our retail partners, who then worked with their supplier partners, to overcome this shortfall. Currently all SeaChoice retailers are now selling yellow-ranked (and in some cases individual rockfish species) that meet their commitments. The suppliers and processors for these groundfish have kept them separated throughout the supply-chain.

While this separation in itself is a success, it also highlights larger seafood issues in Canada, namely overall deficiencies in seafood data tracking, labelling and traceability. A glance at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) guidelines and 'Fish List' shows that any species from the genus *Sebastes* can be labelled as rockfish. This includes 34 species of rockfish in British Columbia and 108 worldwide<sup>1</sup>. This framework also means that 40 different species can be marketed as shrimp, 24 as sole and 19 as prawns. This is problematic not only from a consumer standpoint but also at a national level because the CFIA sets the standards for seafood categorization during importation. The "Taking Stock" report reiterates these deficiencies and highlights the need for better data tracking and labelling for Canadian seafood. Available trade data used to create the report was very broadly categorized, and resultantly difficult to apply sustainability rankings toward. In fact, over thirty per cent of the seafood imported into Canada could not be ranked because it was not tracked with species level grouping. Large amounts of the seafood in this category were fish meals and oils, though some was tracked for human consumption as fish sticks<sup>2</sup>.

Electronic traceability would greatly reduce many of these barriers, and would address other issues with within sustainable seafood, including the risk of IUU and human rights abuses in supply chains. In fact, in complicated supply chains some argue it is a necessary step to verify the sustainability of seafood, rather than simply relying on one-up one-down data verification. Take the rockfish which are being separated at source as an example: other than through genetic verification, there is little ability to absolutely ensure that the species matches the data provided further down the supply chain. Full electronic traceability would help guarantee that the species data was correct, and could provide many additional benefits.

<sup>1</sup> 108 Worldwide <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/publications/docs/rockfish-sebastes-eng.html>

<sup>2</sup> Fish sticks [www.SeaChoice.org/Taking-Stock](http://www.SeaChoice.org/Taking-Stock)