Sustainable Seafood: What’s the problem?

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Ethical Eats, Sustain

With thanks to the Marine Conservation Society

What is sustainable seafood?

• Sourced from well-managed, healthy fish stocks
• Caught/farmed using methods that have a minimal impact on the marine environment
Why choose sustainable seafood?

• By choosing to source sustainable seafood you are helping to ensure the future for:
  – a healthy marine eco-system
  – a productive fishing industry
• Both of these are essential in securing a future for seafood

Effects of fishing

• Around 80% of EU fish populations are over-fished
• Only 15% world fisheries have excess capacity
• Over 80% of the world's large predatory fish have disappeared in the last 50 years
• High levels of bycatch, discards and habitat damage are widespread
• Food webs are being disrupted by the removal of predators and prey
Environmental impacts of fishing

**Low Impact**
- Hand collection
- Line fishing

**Medium Impact**
- Mid-water trawls
- Seine nets

**High Impact**
- Dredges
- Trawls
- Explosives

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**Overfishing**

Biomass of table fish in 1900 (map: V. Christensen, NAFI)
Overfishing

- Overfishing – reduces the reproductive capacity of fish populations and prevents them from recovering
- Some species such as the Bluefin Tuna and Atlantic halibut are now as endangered as the Tiger and Panda
Discards & bycatch

- **Discards**: Throwing away under-sized, non-quota, over-quota, and/or non-target species.
- **Bycatch**: Incidental capture of marine mammals, turtles, seabirds and other non-target animals.

Habitat Disturbance

The effects of fishing gears can alter the marine habitat significantly, reducing its ability to support marine life, including the fish that are being targeted.
Aquaculture

• Now accounts for 46% of all seafood production (FAO, 2010).
• Growing faster than wild capture fisheries and terrestrial meat production.
• So is it the solution?

Aquaculture issues

• **Feed:** Carnivorous species require fishmeal in their diet. (1.7kg wild fish: 1kg farmed salmon?)

• **Disease:** Intensive farming can lead to the rapid spread of disease, which can then spread to wild populations.
Aquaculture issues

• **Pollution:** Farms can have a negative impact on the surrounding area through ‘organic enrichment’.

Aquaculture Issues

• Escapees – Can negatively impact on the genetic diversity of wild populations.
• Medication – Antibiotics and pesticides used in farms can effect the natural marine environment.
• Welfare – from an animal rights viewpoint there can be issues with high stocking densities.
Enough about the problems...

...what about the solutions?

Good Catch
cooking for change, serving the future

Helping You Navigate Seafood Sustainability

Emily Howgate, SeaWeb-Seafood Choices
www.goodcatch.org.uk
Navigating Seafood Sustainability

Step 1 - Gather Information

Step 2 - Source Sustainably

Step 3 - State your Commitment

Step 4 - Communicate Clearly

Step 5 - Influence Wider Progress

1. Gather Information

Assess and monitor the environmental sustainability of the seafood you currently serve.

- To begin to improve you first have to know where you are starting from
- Find out the what, when, where and how of catching and farming your seafood.
- Talk to your fish supplier!
Good Catch…the essentials includes a handy template that can help you pull-together information about the seafood you currently source and serve.

Available to download from [www.goodcatch.org.uk](http://www.goodcatch.org.uk) soon!

### Seafood Audit Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>Average Value</th>
<th>Average Calories</th>
<th>Average Protein</th>
<th>Average Fat</th>
<th>Average Carbs</th>
<th>Average Price</th>
<th>MSC Rating</th>
<th>MCS Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Meigye</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowfin Tuna</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cod</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Source Sustainably

Make improvements to your current buying practices.

- **Avoid the Worst**
  e.g. MCS rating
  - 5

- **Promote the Best**
  - ‘demonstrably sustainable’
  - e.g. MSC certified or proven
  - 1
  - MCS rating
  - 2

- **Improve the Rest**
  - e.g. MCS rating
  - 3
  - 4

MCS ratings: [www.fishonline.org](http://www.fishonline.org)
Top Tip:
- Mix up the menu

- Think about serving different types of seafood, giving commonly exploited species a rest.
- Cooking new seafood creatively can inspire further demand for alternative species from your customers.

Top Tip
- Go low

- Buying fish that eat low on the food chain can be more sustainable than larger, predatory fish which need more food and time to grow and are susceptible to over-fishing.
- An added health bonus of Omega oils from the small, oily fish
- Something to consider for both wild and farmed
Top Tip
- Seasonal specials
...and size does matter!

- Celebrate fresh, wild seafood at its peak by ordering with the seasons and highlighting this on your menu.

- Avoiding buying wild fish during their spawning season allows species to breed and replenish their populations.

- …As does only using fish that are mature and above breeding size

Top Tip
- Flex it

- Be as flexible as possible to adapt to availability of sustainable seafood.

- Seafood specials can draw attention to a specific sustainable option.

- Simply describing dishes as ‘fish’ or ‘seafood’ on your menu means you don’t pin yourself down to a particular species.
Top Tip
- Tick the box

- Check out the ‘fish with the tick’ at www.msc.org and start serving seafood that is certified as sustainable.
- Independent assurance of sustainability - for you and your customer

3. State your Commitment
Create a publicly available policy - useful within your business and externally for customers/press/investors…

- A business-wide vision and approach to seafood
- Outline specific actions you are taking to improve what you buy, serve and promote
- Identify clear goals and targets for a set time period
4. Communicate Clearly

Communicating your sustainable seafood choices can make customers more likely to support your business, build your reputation and encourage others to take similar steps.

- Make information on the source of your seafood clearly available
- Educate your whole team on fish issues and menu items
- FoH staff and menus are key. Plus posters, leaflets and other marketing materials

Communicate Clearly
5. Influence Wider Progress

Improving your own sourcing is leading by example, but you can also encourage wider progress. Your strengths and connections can influence better seafood practices, management and policy.

- Use your voice with media, fellow chefs and associations
- Support marine campaigns
- Encourage suppliers and producers to improve, and make information available
- Cultivate the next generation
- Support government policy
Navigating Seafood Sustainability

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Many Thanks, get in touch for further information

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www.goodcatch.org.uk
MSC on the Menu

Billingsgate
2nd March 2011

The MSC Vision

Our vision is of the world’s oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.
How does the MSC work?

A certification programme to promote and reward sustainable fisheries

1. Fisheries measured against a rigorous environmental standard (voluntarily)

2. Those that meet the standard are ‘certified’, and can use the ecolabel on products to communicate their good practice

3. The MSC ecolabel gives consumers the choice of buying sustainable fish

The 3 principles of the MSC environmental standard for sustainable fisheries

1. **Sustainability of the stock**
   - The target species is of a biologically sustainable population, capable of maintaining high productivity over time

2. **Ecosystem Impact**
   - The fisheries’ activity does not threaten the wider marine environment (this includes protecting biodiversity, minimising bycatch, using sustainable gear type etc)

3. **Effective Management**
   - The fishery is managed effectively and competently to ensure sustainability continues
All Fisheries in the MSC Programme:

102 certified: ★ 125 in assessment ★ 6 in small scale fishery trials ★

- About 12% of the world's edible wild capture fisheries are now engaged in the programme
- Approx 9 million tonnes of seafood in total

- 24% wild-caught 'whitefish'
- 42% global wild-caught salmon

What MSC fish can I put on my menu?

Cod, haddock, pollock, saithe (coley)
Wild Salmon
Mackerel, sardines, herring
Dover sole, plaice
Scallops
Cold water prawns, Langoustine
Mussels

And there are more on the cards... megrim, monkfish, velvet crab,

Many of these are UK fisheries
Chain of Custody: Maintaining traceability

Certified fish will just get lost in the supply chain – what’s the point?

Every party in the supply chain that takes ownership of the product passes a traceability audit

Assurance for customers, consumers and fisheries that only MSC certified fish uses the ecolabel

FOLLOW THE LOGO...!

MSC on the menu: Restaurants

The last 18 months has seen a massive increase in uptake in MSC in foodservice.

High profile restaurants such as Ondine, Fifteen and Moshi Moshi

Broad range of restaurants we are working with from fish and chip shops to sushi to michelin starred