

Did You Know?

Not all seafood is created equal. Much of the fish available today in the United States is imported, frequently from places where health, safety and environmental standards for growing or catching fish are weak or non-existent. Less than 2% of seafood imports to the U.S. are inspected for contamination. Also, many popular wild fish have been managed poorly and are depleted, are caught using gear that can hurt habitat and other wildlife, and/or contain substances like mercury or PCBs that can cause serious health problems. These concerns can make choosing healthful and sustainable fish challenging.

Fortunately, there are still good domestic seafood options. This card provides recommendations for cleaner, greener, safer choices for popular fish nationwide. For additional local alternatives in specific regions, see:

www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish



Questions to Ask About Your Seafood

- **Where is it from?** (Domestic or imported — choose domestic.)
- **Is it caught or farmed locally?** (Choose local foods over those shipped from far away.)
- **Is it farmed or wild?** (Choose wild, unless otherwise stated on this card.)
- **How is it caught?** (Ask if the method has high bycatch or habitat damage — favor fish caught by hook and line, handline, troll, jig and speargun.)
- **How is it farmed?** (Choose seafood that has been farmed in the U.S., especially in low or no output, re-circulating systems. Tilapia, shrimp, hybrid striped bass and arctic char are examples of fish that are or are soon to be farmed this way in the U.S.)
- **Is it associated with any contaminants?** (Mercury, PCBs, antibiotics, etc.)

Tip: Try a variety of seafood. This reduces your exposure to possible contaminants and helps to lower pressure on wild fish that have become over-popular choices.

Our Dirty Dozen

Here's a quick guide to our "dirty dozen" of common seafood choices nationwide that we give a big thumbs down. To be avoided:

Atlantic cod

Atlantic flatfish – e.g.: flounder, halibut, sole

Blue crab

Caviar (wild caught sturgeon, especially Beluga)

Chilean seabass

Farmed salmon (often called "Atlantic salmon") **Tip:** Don't be fooled by "organic" salmon, either — it's farmed internationally and not certified by U.S. standards!

Imported farmed shrimp

Imported king crab

Orange roughy

Red snapper

Sharks

Tuna, especially Atlantic bluefin

www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Smart Seafood Guide



Clean, Green and Safe Seafood Substitutes

2009

food&waterwatch



National Seafood Substitution Recommendations from Food & Water Watch

How to use this card: Look for the type of seafood you like in the left column (“If you like...”), and find cleaner, greener, safer recommendations in the right (“Choose...”). Sometimes the better choice is just a more specific type of fish that you may already like. Other times, we suggest a substitution. See the reverse for “Questions to Ask About Seafood” that can help guide you to better options and our “Dirty Dozen” list of fish to avoid.

IF YOU LIKE...	CHOOSE:
Bonito, shark, swordfish or tuna	✓ U.S. wild pole- or troll-caught mahi-mahi or U.S. Pacific sablefish/black cod
Catfish	✓ U.S. farmed catfish
Chilean seabass, cod, flounder/sole, halibut, orange roughy, red snapper or tilapia	✓ U.S. wild pole- or troll-caught mahi-mahi, U.S. wild Pacific halibut, U.S. wild Pacific cod (not trawl caught), U.S. wild Pacific whiting or U.S. farmed tilapia
Clams, mussels or oysters	✓ U.S. wild hand-raked clams, U.S. farmed clams, U.S. farmed oysters or U.S. farmed mussels, especially rope-grown
Crab	✓ U.S. wild crab (except blue crab*), including: Alaskan king, dungeness, golden, Jonah, rock (“peekeytoe”), stone

*Blue crab should be avoided due to current overfishing and mercury and PCB contamination concerns.

IF YOU LIKE...	CHOOSE:
Lobster	✓ U.S. wild lobster, especially American (“Maine”) or Pacific spiny
Salmon	✓ U.S. wild Alaskan salmon
Sardines	✓ U.S. wild Pacific sardines
Scallops	✓ U.S. wild diver-caught/day boat scallops
Shrimp	✓ U.S. wild shrimp, especially South Atlantic white, Pacific (“Oregon”) pinks and Florida (“Key West” or “Tortugas”) pinks
Squid (calamari) or octopus	✓ U.S. wild squid, especially Atlantic trap- or net-caught longfin or Pacific market (“California”)

These recommendations are intended as a general reference. They are not intended to provide specific medical advice, supplant any government warnings or otherwise prevent exposure to any health hazards associated with seafood. People should always follow proper acquisition, handling and cooking procedures of any seafood they prepare or consume.

