

# U.S. SEAFOOD

## A GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY

### In Brief:

- The United States is a recognized global leader in sustainable seafood. Marine fisheries in the U.S. are conducted under science-based fishery management plans developed by regional fishery management councils through an open, public process, and using the best scientific information available. By law, U.S. seafood must be caught according to fishery management plans that consider social and economic outcomes for fishing communities; prevent overfishing; rebuild depleted stocks; minimize bycatch and interactions with protected species; and identify and conserve essential fish habitat.
- Alaska is the nation's largest source of domestic wild caught seafood. Nearly 60% of all seafood harvested in the U.S. comes from Alaska – that represents nearly 95% of the wild salmon, 99% of wild cod, 95% of wild halibut and 70% of wild sablefish.
- US Atlantic Ocean fishery lobster conservation methods dating back more than 150 years have enhanced stocks of the iconic American lobster, and a little more than 20 years ago cutting-edge science transformed an overfished sea scallop population into the largest wild scallop fishery worldwide.

### Environmental Stewardship: A commitment to continuous improvement

- Accountability and transparency are key elements to how the United States manages fishery resources for sustainability.
- The federal agency responsible for managing U.S. fisheries is required to present a report to the United States Congress each year documenting the health and population status of fish and shellfish stocks.
- From recreational and small-scale tribal fishermen to large-scale vessels harvesting and processing millions of tons of fish, U.S. fisheries are scientifically monitored and regionally managed to meet ten national standards.
- All U.S. seafood is managed for protection against overfishing, habitat damage and pollution. At the end of 2020, 47 U.S. federally managed fish stocks have been declared rebuilt.
- The Alaska State Constitution mandates that: “fish...be utilized, developed and maintained on the sustained yield principle.” No commercially harvested Alaska species are classified as overfished.
- Alaska's marine habitats are pristine, and Alaska's cold, glacier-fed waters produce some of the purest, high-quality seafood in the world; remarkably free of contamination by pesticides, petroleum derivatives, PCBs, metals and bacteria.
- Since 1963, abundance and distributions studies are conducted every spring and fall throughout the U.S. range of the American lobster. This time series provides fishery managers with detailed information concerning lobster abundance. This survey also constitutes the world's longest and most comprehensive standardized measure of distribution and abundance trends in commercially harvested seafood.
- The U.S. works individually with other countries that have an interest in the U.S. science-based management model, which uses the best available science to actively monitor and manage fisheries.
- The U.S. is committed to combatting global Illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing by working in partnership with other U.S. government agencies, foreign governments and entities, international organizations, non-government organizations, and the private sector.



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## A commitment to traceability, food safety & health

- In order to provide credible, third-party verification of sustainability and traceability to customers, all major Alaska fisheries are certified sustainable by the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification.
- Rigorous resource monitoring and management, employing state-of-the-art science and fishermen collaboration, makes sea scallops a smart seafood choice. U.S. Atlantic Sea scallops offer consistent quality and are fully traceable from the end consumer back to the date and location of harvest.
- Alaska/Pacific salmon, Alaska pollock, Pacific cod, U.S shrimp and catfish are all low-mercury fish and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends that pregnant women consume these species two to three times a week.
- U.S. seafood is a healthy food choice, providing key nutrients and healthy protein for everyone from infants to adults. Seafood supplies the nutrients essential for strong bones, brain development, and healthy immune and cardiovascular systems.
- Canned Alaska salmon and its soft, edible bones is a rich source of calcium. It is a convenient source for people of all ages, including children who don't eat dairy products but need high amounts of calcium to build strong bones.
- Fresh and frozen Alaska salmon is another alternative, offering high concentrations of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, which is only available from seafood or marine plants. Receiving adequate omega-3s has been associated with improved brain and heart health, and is vital to cognitive development in infants and children. It has also been linked to lower risk of coronary heart disease, helping prevent and reduce chronic inflammation, improving gut health, lowered Alzheimer's risk, and many other health benefits.



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## Economic Profitability: A commitment to long-term viability

- In 2019, U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.3 billion pounds of seafood valued at US\$5.4 billion.
- In 2017, U.S. commercial and recreational saltwater fishing generated more than US\$244 billion in sales impacts and supported 1.74 million jobs in the United States in marine fishing and across the broader economy.
- Buying U.S.-harvested fish and shellfish guarantees that your seafood meets rigorous state and federal standards and supports American jobs.
- Careful stewardship of New England's fishery resources from earliest times to the present continues to sustain the economic vitality of coastal communities.
- In Alaska, thousands of families make their living from the resources of Alaska's rugged 34,000 miles of sparsely populated coastline. In fact, fishing and seafood processing employ more people than any other industry in Alaska.
- US seafood is popular in Europe. In 2020, the European Union accounted for 18% of total US seafood exports by value and 20% of total exports by volume. Leading products were Alaskan pollock, salmon, surimi, hake, lobster, cod, scallops, shrimp, squid, tuna and dogfish.

### Sources

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*The 2017 Annual Report on the Status of U.S. Fisheries. U.S. Dept. of Commerce, NOAA, 2018*  
*Alaska Seafood Sustainability in Plain English. Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, 2019*  
*Export data: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service*

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