

CANADIANS EATING IN THE DARK:

A REPORT CARD OF INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

To assess the adequacy of Canada's seafood labelling regulations, SeaChoice compared Canadian regulatory requirements for seafood labels to two of Canada's major seafood trading partners, the European Union (EU) and the United States (US). With retailers selling two-thirds of seafood sold in Canada, proper labelling at the retail point-of-sale is essential to promote transparency, reduce seafood fraud, and increase consumer confidence.

Here's what we found.

EUROPEAN UNION

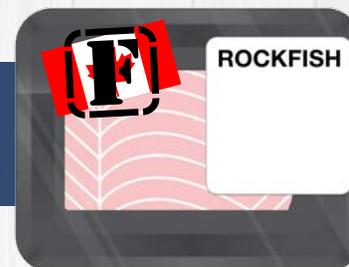


*United Kingdom commercial designation

UNITED STATES



CANADA



Canada Scores an "F" for seafood labelling regulations.

REPORT CARD

Basic Elements of Seafood Labelling

			
Common Name	✓	✓	✓
Scientific Name	✓	✗	✗
Production Method (Farmed or Wild)	✓*	✓	✗
Harvest Method	✓**	✗	✗
Geographic Origin	✓	✗	✗
Country of Last Major Transformation/Processing***	✓	✓	✓
GRADE	A	D	F

Scoring: A=above 5; B=5; C=4; D=3; F=2 or lower

Why Does Seafood Labelling Matter?

Comprehensive labels required on seafood can:

FOR CONSUMERS:

- Reduce risk of seafood fraud.
- Increase transparency.
- Provide information on environmental sustainability and/or human rights abuses.
- Improve consumer confidence and allow for consumer choice.

FOR INDUSTRY & THE ECONOMY:

- Increase supply chain traceability.
- Decrease fraudulent and illegal products from entering the supply chain.
- Maintain market competitiveness, through consistency with international requirements.
- Ensure compliance with international trade agreements.

FOR GOVERNMENT:

- Offer consistency with international requirements to facilitate smoother sale and trade operations.
- Allow for information collected on seafood imports (species name, where and how it was caught or farmed) to be transmitted throughout the supply chain.
- Provide more robust and accurate data on seafood production, imports and exports.
- Allow for a more efficient response to health and safety concerns.

*Labelled under the following designations: 'farmed' or 'caught'.

**Depicts harvest method for wild-caught fisheries, but not for farmed seafood: a ½ score is awarded.

***Labelled as "Identification mark" in the EU and "Country of Origin" in the US and Canada.

What Your Seafood Label Doesn't Tell You

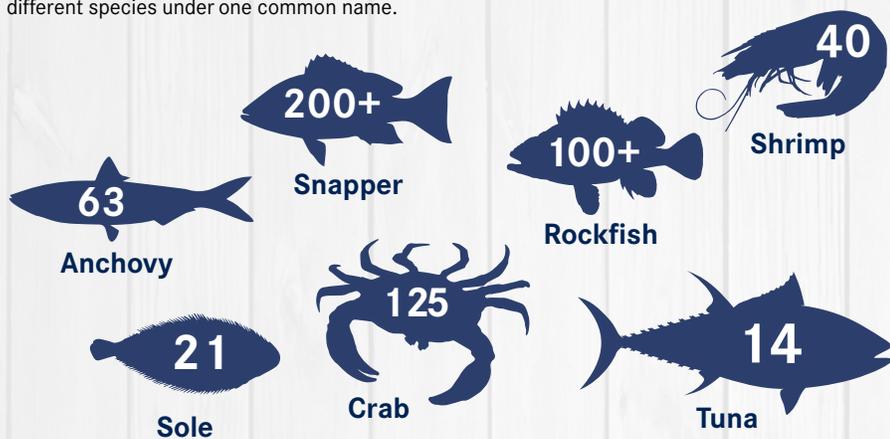
Canada's only labelling requirement for domestic seafood products is to list the species **common name**. According to CFIA's guidelines, one common name can refer to many different species – sometimes hundreds.

For imported species, the “**country of origin**” must also be listed – however this can simply mean the place where the fish was last processed, not where it was actually caught or farmed.

These two requirements alone are insufficient for consumers and businesses to determine key information about the species they are purchasing.

ONE COMMON NAME = MANY SPECIES

The CFIA Fish List allows for the lumping of many different species under one common name.



Nutrition Facts* Valeur nutritive

Serving Size About 1 Piece (145g)
Portion environ 1 morceau (145g)

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
IUU	?%
Human Rights Violations	?%
Overfishing	?%
Bycatch	?%
Habitat Damage	?%
Antibiotics	?%
Pesticides	?%
Mercury Levels	?%

**This image is not an example of what seafood labels should include. It is meant to illustrate the fact that there can be many associated issues with a seafood item that Canadian consumers are unable to identify when key labelling information is not included on a label or package.*

More detailed labelling can help shed some light on the likelihood of these issues being associated with seafood products.

SeaChoice Recommends a Seafood Labelling Action Plan for Canada

SEACHOICE CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SEAFOOD LABELLING IN CANADA.

- 1** Amend Canadian food labelling regulations to include the following information on all seafood products:

 - Species' scientific name
 - Production method (*farmed or wild*)
 - Geographic origin (*region of catch or area of production*)
 - Harvest method (*gear type or farming method*)
- 2** To improve seafood traceability, Canadian seafood labelling regulations must require comprehensive seafood labelling throughout the seafood supply chain, from source to consumer.