

Wild-Caught Shellfish

Sustainability Snapshot



Product Description

Wild-Caught Shellfish includes food products composed primarily of crustaceans and mollusks harvested from the ocean or inland waters. Product types include it includes species such as shrimps, prawns, lobsters, crabs, mussels, oysters, clams, abalones, scallops, and cockles.

Mission

The mission of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) is to improve the sustainability of products when they are made, purchased, and used, with a focus on manufacturers and the retail buyers who decide what products to carry in stores. The information in this document is drawn from our detailed research on known and potential social and environmental impacts across product life cycles. TSC acknowledges that other issues exist, but we have included here those that are most relevant to the decision making of retail buying teams and manufacturers. The topics are listed alphabetically for ease of reading; the order does not represent prioritization or other criteria.



Managing the Supply Chain

Animal Welfare

Poor fishing operations procedures can lead to injuries, distress, or death of non-target species (i.e. by-catch). Fishing operators should implement best practices for animal welfare, which include bycatch reduction and prevention of abandoned or lost fishing nets or gear, to avoid these problems.

Biodiversity

Various species of fish, mammals, and turtles can be accidentally caught and killed during fishing operations. Fishing operators can use certifications and implement programs, practices, and technologies to reduce these biodiversity impacts. These strategies should also address impacts related to sea floor disturbance, chemical and trash pollution, and declining fish populations (i.e. bycatch).

Climate and Energy

Electricity and fuel use during fishing operations release greenhouse gases and can pollute the air and water. Fishing operators and manufacturers should track energy use and implement energy efficiency programs.

Pollution

Use of chemicals to prevent unwanted sea life (e.g., barnacles) from growing on equipment and boats can have negative effects on workers, aquatic animals, and plants. Use of chemicals can also release greenhouse gases. Loss of fishing nets or gear creates trash in the ocean and leads to entanglement of animals, also called ghost fishing. Fishing operators should use programs, practices, and technologies to reduce chemical use and prevent ocean pollution.



Use of Resources

Packaging

Packaging design should be optimized to ensure that packaging performs its essential functions of containment and protection while minimizing use of materials, energy resources, and environmental impacts across the life cycle of the packaged product. Under-packaging and over-packaging can both lead to increased impacts. These impacts may be mitigated by using more energy-efficient manufacturing, creating packaging materials from renewable resources, designing packaging to be recyclable, and encouraging consumer recycling.



Workers and Communities

Community Rights

Fishing operations can impact fish habitats and may cause conflicts with others over access to land, water, and fishing grounds. Fishing operators should consult with communities about their operations and avoid restricting community access to fishing grounds.

Forced or Child Labor

In some areas, there is a risk of forced or child labor, characterized by actions such as trafficking, withholding wages or documents, and restricting workers to the work site. Fishing operations should determine if and where forced or child labor occurs and work with supply chain partners and experts to address these issues to ensure all workers have fair working conditions.

Workers

Fishing industry workers, especially women and migrants, may face unfair pay, discrimination, and limited freedoms. They may also be exposed to harmful chemicals or other industrial hazards. Fishing operators should implement programs that protect labor rights and ensure the health and safety of their workers.