



Alaska Seafood

# Sustainability

In Plain English





The **sustainable** seafood movement is sweeping across the world, and more and more people are taking interest.

But what does all this talk about sustainability **really mean?**

And what impact does **your choice** for dinner have on the world around you?

In the pages ahead, we make sustainability easy. So that in just minutes, you can **learn how** to make a smart, sustainable seafood choice—every time.

To start, all you have to do is visit **Alaska**... beginning on the very next page.

# Alaska

**[ə-'las-kə]** *n.* The last frontier is first in sustainability.

If you're like most people, you know Alaska for its snow-covered mountains, glaciers that date back millions of years, and the incredible green beauty in summertime. But the state is also a world model for sustainability—and maybe for governmental genius, too. That's because Alaska is the only state with a mandate for sustainable seafood written right into its State Constitution.

All told, Alaska supplies more than half of the wild-caught seafood in the United States. And Alaska will always be home to the greatest salmon runs in the world, providing as much as 95 percent of North America's wild salmon. To learn more about Alaska's tradition of sustainability, read on.

## ***What kinds of seafood come from Alaska?***

- *Five species of salmon: king, sockeye, coho, keta and pink*
- *A wide variety of whitefish, including halibut, black cod, Alaska Pollock, cod, sole and surimi seafood*
- *King, snow (opilio and bairdi) and Dungeness crab*
- *Alaska Weathervane scallops*
- *Spot prawns*



# Sustainable Seafood

**[sə-'stā-nə-bəl 'sē-ˌfūd]** *n.*

Having enough fish to go around.

What is sustainable seafood? It's seafood that's managed and fished using practices that ensure there will always be more to catch in the future.

The secret to Alaska's success lies in two basic principles:

- Responsible fisheries management and sustainable fishing practices take care not to harm the fish, other marine plants and animals, nor the environment.
- Fish populations are never overfished. Overfishing happens when too many fish are taken from the sea and there are not enough fish left to replenish the natural population.

Alaska boasts having one of the world's few governments that is truly dedicated to sustainability. It's a commitment that dates all the way back to Alaska becoming a state in 1959, when Alaskans wrote sustainability into their Constitution—calling for all fisheries to be sustainably managed. In this way, Alaska promises to provide wild-caught and sustainable seafood for generations to come.



# Responsibility & Commitment

**[ri-,spän(t)-sə-'bi-lə-tē ən(d) kə-'mit-mənt]** *n.*

What each of us must do to ensure sustainable seafood.

From the fisherman to the supplier, from the chef to the diner or from the retailer to the consumer—we all have a role to play in ensuring that sustainable seafood lands on our plates. In Alaska, this reverence for fish can be seen in native arts dating back centuries, as well as in the fishing practices of the thousands of families who today make their living off the sea. In fact, fishing and seafood processing employ more people than any other industry in Alaska.

Being responsible stewards of this natural resource means that these fishing families must sometimes put aside short-term opportunities. They understand the importance of obeying the strict fishing laws, using careful harvesting methods, accurately reporting their catches and adhering to scientific data. The men and women who fish the 34,000 miles of Alaskan coastline know that taking such measures is the only way to protect the fish and their livelihood.



But it doesn't stop there. It is the responsibility of suppliers, chefs and retailers to specifically purchase sustainable seafood from fisheries like those in Alaska—fisheries that can prove each fish was managed and caught in a sustainable way. Consumers also have the opportunity to make a difference. By purchasing only sustainable seafood, you can influence the market and increase awareness of making responsible seafood choices.



# An Ideal Environment

**[ī-'dē(-ə)l in-'vī-rə(n)-mənt]** *adj.* Fishing areas that are clean, healthy, and protected from harmful activities.

In a naturally clean environment, salmon, whitefish varieties and shellfish eat only what nature provides. This is Alaska, where marine habitats are protected from harmful fishing methods, unnecessary human disturbance, industrial activities and pollution.

And how does Alaska make sure the environment stays that way? Start with the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). More than 40 MPAs, covering hundreds of thousands of square miles have been established in the waters off Alaska to safeguard this sensitive habitat from human activity. This protects more than the wild-caught seafood you enjoy. Whales, sea lions, otters and birds are also ensured safe, clean habitats.

Alaska also follows a number of governmental protection acts, including the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Fur Seal Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act.

How vigilant is the state in protecting marine life? No Alaska seafood has been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Ever.



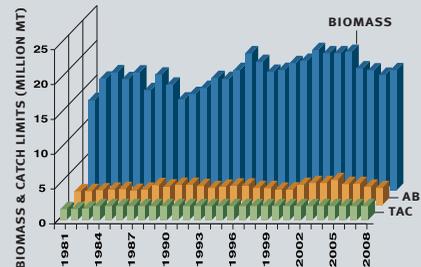
# Science-based

**['sī-ən(t)s -'bāst]** *adj.* How fishermen know how many fish they can catch.

In Alaska, the numbers do more than just tell the story. They are the story. That's because every aspect of fishing in Alaska is based on the latest scientific data. As new research emerges, the scientists of Alaska's fisheries set new guidelines for the total number of fish that can be caught. It's a complicated process, to be sure, but one that prevents

overfishing and helps maintain a healthy and sustainable fish population, while also preserving the delicate ecosystem. It's such a precautionary and conservative approach, Alaska's fisheries have become a model for the world.

**BERING SEA/ALEUTIAN ISLANDS (BSAI) GROUND FISH CATCH LIMITS 1981-2008**



Scientists first calculate the **Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)**, which is the maximum number of fish that can be

sustainably caught. As the chart shows, this is a very small portion of the total amount of fish, the **Biomass**, available in the sea. Then, to be extra cautious, fisheries managers go a step further and determine the **Total Allowable Catch (TAC)**, which is the total amount of fish that can legally be harvested. Because this number never exceeds the Acceptable Biological Catch, the state of Alaska ensures there will always be plenty of fish in the sea, season after season.

# Governance & Management

**['gə-vər-nən(t)s ən(d) 'ma-nij-mənt]** *n.* Policies and fishing methods that ensure Alaska seafood remains sustainable.



Being sustainable is not just a matter of following the science. It's a large-scale commitment to responsible fisheries management and a strong governing system.

In Alaska, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (along with several other organizations at the state, federal and international level) work together to set sustainable fishery management methods that uphold Alaska's high standards.

The state of Alaska employs the following practices:

- Time-and-area closures (this allows fishing during certain times or in certain areas, but not in others)
- Restrictions on size of boats
- Restrictions on type of fishing gear
- Gear prohibition



# Collaboration

**[kə-'la-bə-,rā-shən]** *n.* How everyone works together in Alaska to meet this common goal.

Sustainable seafood in Alaska is the result of an enviable model of cooperation between the state's citizens and a governing system that works. The state's unique blend of collaboration and public decision-making are key features of the Alaska fisheries management model.

State, federal and international organizations, for instance, all work together to manage and oversee the major Alaska fisheries— salmon, groundfish, halibut and crab. These organizations are responsible for scientific research, enforcement of the laws, setting policies, and determining the number of fish that can be caught based on the scientific data.

What's more, public participation by fishermen and seafood processors, as well as environmental groups, is encouraged. Alaskans believe that the opportunity for the public to participate in the fisheries management process helps build widespread understanding about the importance of smart management actions.



# Enforcement

**[in-'fōr-smənt]** *n.* How Alaska makes sure the rules are followed.

By now, it's clear that fishing in Alaska is more than simply casting a line in the water and waiting for a fish to bite. A strict set of rules is in place. And where there are rules, there must be enforcement.

In Alaska, state and federal agencies are responsible for enforcing the sustainable fishing practices and laws. These include the Alaska Department of Public Safety's Wildlife Troopers, the National Marine Fisheries Service Office for Law Enforcement, and the U.S. Coast Guard, among others. Fishermen and seafood processors are carefully monitored and controlled to make sure that everyone is following the rules and accurately reporting the number of fish that have been caught.

# A Strong Track Record

**['træk 're-kərd]** *n.* The effectiveness of Alaska's policies.



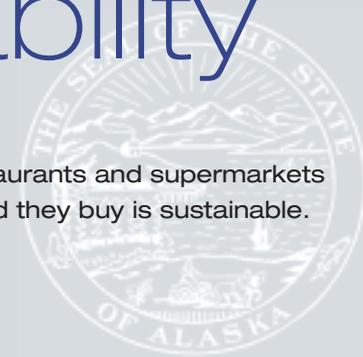
How strong is the Alaska track record for sustainability? More and more, fisheries in other states are modeling their operations after those of Alaska. Consider the track record, and you'll see why:

- Alaska's successful fisheries management practices have led to consistently healthy and sustainable fish harvests, year after year.
- For example, Alaska's salmon harvests have remained abundant for more than three decades.
- And as noted earlier, no species of Alaska seafood has ever been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The Alaskan commitment to sustainability, as mandated in the State Constitution has time and again proved the effectiveness of strict, science-based, precautionary fisheries management.



# Traceability



**[ˌtrā-sə-ˈbi-lə-tē]** *n.* How restaurants and supermarkets know that the Alaska seafood they buy is sustainable.

Traceability is “the ability to follow the movement of a food through specified stages of production, processing and distribution”.\* It can be achieved by having a system for keeping track of products as they are received, processed, labeled and shipped.

Strict laws make sure that every fish a restaurant or supermarket orders from Alaska, is from Alaska. All Alaska seafood suppliers must conform to applicable national and international laws governing food producers. Alaska seafood suppliers go a step beyond and also conform to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute’s Traceability Standard. This way, a restaurant or supermarket can always check to make sure the seafood they receive is wild and sustainable seafood from Alaska.

To see the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute’s Traceability Standard, visit [www.alaskaseafood.org/sustainability/traceability.html](http://www.alaskaseafood.org/sustainability/traceability.html).

\**Codex Alimentarius*

# Take Action

[ˈtāk ˈak-shən] v. What you can do to help.



When it comes to selecting from a wide variety of healthy and delicious, sustainable seafood options, Alaska has you covered. When you buy Alaska seafood, you are making a responsible and tasty choice that's good for you—and supports sustainable seafood.

So next time you're at your favorite restaurant or supermarket, be sure to ask your waiter or fishmonger where the seafood came from and how it was fished. Better yet, simply ask for Alaska, or look for the Alaska Seafood logo.



*Wild, Natural & Sustainable®*

For more information on sustainable fishing practices and Alaska seafood, please visit [www.alaskaseafood.org](http://www.alaskaseafood.org).

## About the artist:

# Rie Muñoz

Rie Muñoz is one of Alaska's most beloved and recognized artists, portraying the daily life of Alaskans with sensitivity, vivid colors and whimsical humor. Having spent most of her life in Alaska, Muñoz' work is an engaging and intimate portrait of life in Alaska with a focus on everyday activities such as fishing and processing seafood. Although she was raised in California, a vacation on a whim brought her to Alaska in 1951. She has been a proud Alaskan ever since, living in many of Alaska's small communities and holding a variety of jobs including journalist, teacher, museum curator, artist and mother. In 1972, she decided to devote herself fulltime to her art.

Muñoz studied art at Washington and Lee University in Virginia and at the University of Alaska-Juneau. She received the University of Alaska's Honorary Doctorate of Humanities Degree in May of 1999. She was also the recipient of the 2004 Governor's Award for Individual Artist, and she was inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame in 2009. Her paintings, prints and reproductions are carried by galleries throughout the U.S. and Canada. She has had many watercolor exhibits in Alaska, Oregon and Washington State.



Mark Kelley

*“My artwork can best be described as expressionism. The term applies to work that rejects camera snapshot realism, and instead, expresses emotion by distortion and strong colors. My paintings reflect an interest in the day-to-day activities of Alaskans such as fishing, berry picking, children at play, and crabbing. I am also fascinated with the legends of Alaska's Native people. While I find much to paint around Juneau, most of my material comes from sketching trips taken to the far corners of Alaska. I've traveled and sketched almost every community in Alaska.”*

[www.riemunoz.com](http://www.riemunoz.com)

## Learn the Lingo

Glossary of sustainable seafood and harvesting terminology.

### **Acceptable Biological Catch**

The maximum number of fish that can be harvested. This is a very small portion of the total amount of fish (biomass) available in the sea.

### **Bycatch**

Species unintentionally caught.

### **Catch Limits**

The amount of fish allowed to be caught in a year.

### **Escapement**

The annual estimated number of spawning salmon that escape capture in a fishery.

### **Overfishing**

Catching so many fish that too few are left in the ocean to reproduce at rates that can sustain a healthy population. Overfishing occurs when fish are caught faster than they can reproduce.

### **Precautionary Principle**

A sustainable fisheries management principle that emphasizes a cautionary approach, erring on the side of conservation.

### **Sustainable Seafood**

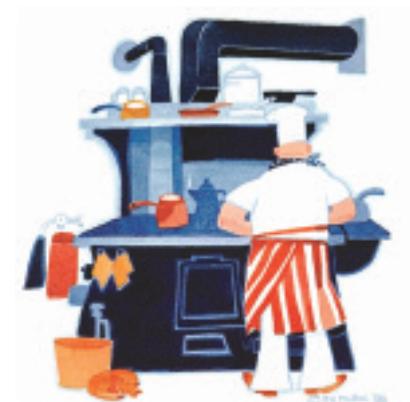
Seafood from fisheries that can exist long-term without compromising the survival of the species or the health of the surrounding ecosystem.

### **Total Allowable Catch**

The total amount of fish that fishermen can legally harvest. This number is always less than the acceptable biological catch.

### **Traceability**

The ability to follow the movement of a food through specified stages of production, processing, and distribution.





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