



Sustainable Seafood Initiative Sustainability Criteria

The Sustainable Seafood Initiative does not assign quantitative values to sustainability of seafood products. Instead, the following questions and considerations are addressed to evaluate the status of the stock, determine if the seafood species is well managed and if enforcement is effective, and identify any other habitat or by-catch issues that should be considered.

Management

- Does the country of origin have national regulations governing the catch of the product?
- Do they participate in international regulatory partnerships?
- What does the appropriate management body say about the sustainability of the product?
- Is the product regulated under a fishery management plan?
- If not, is the fishery of a scale that requires a management plan? *A small or developing fishery may still be considered sustainable even though a management plan is not yet in place.*
- Does the management plan consider the life history characteristics (i.e. growth, maturity, reproductive potential) of the species? *We believe all fisheries can be sustainable, though some may be sustainable only at very low levels of fishing pressure, as dictated by life history characteristics of the specific species.*

Enforcement

- Does the country of origin effectively enforce regulations? *It is important that both commercial and recreational regulations are enforced to maintain sustainability. It is also important that products in the retail pathway are from legal sources.*
- Does the country of origin adhere to and enforce regulations set forth by relevant international regulatory bodies?

Stock status

- What is the quantity and quality of the data, from both the commercial and recreational sectors, used to determine the status of the stocks?
- If the stock is already depleted, is the population still being overfished or is it in the process of rebuilding? *If the stock is under a rebuilding plan or in the process of rebuilding, we consider the fishery to be on a path to sustainability and we believe the product is sustainably acceptable.*
- If the stock is currently undergoing overfishing, is management in place to halt overfishing? *If the responsible management agency has not taken steps to address overfishing, the product is not on a path to sustainability and we believe the product is not sustainably acceptable.*

Habitat and By-catch

- Are there valid measures of habitat impact?
- If so, is the fishery negatively impacting habitat?
- Does the fishery involve by-catch of undersize or non-target species?
- Is the fishery utilizing or discarding by-catch? Is the fishery attempting to minimize its effect on habitat and by-catch? *We feel that fisheries that attempt to lessen their impact on the surrounding*