



**Whole Foods Market Seafood Department  
Quality Standards Overview for Wild-Caught Seafood  
April 20, 2021**

1. Wild-caught seafood must be sourced from fisheries that are **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified OR rated green or yellow** by Monterey Bay Aquarium (MBA) Seafood Watch. No wild-caught seafood should be sourced from fisheries that are un-rated or rated red by MBA.
2. MSC certification and the MBA rating system take into account abundance of the stock, impacts of the fishery on the target stock and on other species, effectiveness of management for the fishery, and impacts of fishing on the habitat and ecosystem.
3. Sourcing must be based on the current certification status and most up-to-date ratings.
4. Despite their ratings or certification status, the following species are not permitted for sale due to conservation concerns: bluefin tuna, orange roughy, sharks (all species), marlin (exception: Hawaii-caught Blue marlin in our Hawaii stores only), wild-caught steelhead trout, and Lake Victoria Perch.
5. Sale of live seafood, including lobsters and crabs, urchins, and other species is prohibited due to the difficulty of maintaining humane conditions for the animals both during transport and in our stores. The only exception are for: 1) bivalve molluscs, such as oysters, clams and mussels; 2) live lobsters sold in two Whole Foods Market stores, Hyannis, MA and Portland, ME. Live lobsters must also meet our additional requirements for handling, transport, and processing.
6. Additional requirements for handling, transport, and processing are in place for the American Lobster species. American Lobster must be sourced according to the Whole Foods Market Standards for American Lobster:  
[https://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/missions-values/seafood-sustainability/Whole Foods Market Quality Standards North American Lobster March2019.pdf](https://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/missions-values/seafood-sustainability/Whole_Foods_Market_Quality_Standards_North_American_Lobster_March2019.pdf)
7. Escolar is not permitted for sale due to concerns related to digestibility.
8. Use of certain preservatives and moisture retention agents on seafood are prohibited. Prohibited preservatives include, but are not limited to, sodium bisulfite, sodium tri-

polyphosphate (STP), and sodium metabisulfite.

9. Use of carbon monoxide to enhance color, or for any other purpose, is prohibited.
10. Use of filtered wood smoke (also called Tasteless smoke) to retain color, or for any other purpose, is prohibited.
11. Whole Foods Market requires that companies or individuals from whom we source seafood do not participate in the commercial seal hunt on Canada's east coast around Prince Edward Island (PEI), Newfoundland/Labrador and Magdalen Islands.
12. Whole Foods Market requires that companies or individuals from whom we source seafood do not participate in whaling.
13. Suppliers must utilize Whole Foods Market-selected electronic traceability software to allow Whole Foods Market to verify sourcing of all seafood products and to track products throughout the supply chain.

### **Distinguishing Wild-Caught and Farm-Raised Seafood**

Due to the range of definitions used in the seafood industry to distinguish between wild-caught and farm-raised seafood, Whole Foods Market uses the following criteria to define farm-raised seafood (aquaculture). All other seafood is considered wild-caught by Whole Foods Market.

Definition of Aquaculture: The farming of aquatic organisms whereby growers enhance production by maintaining and managing cultured stocks in a defined area. To qualify as a farmed product (*i.e.*, not wild-caught), ALL of the following conditions must be met:

- Producers regularly add seed/eggs/post-larvae/fry/smolts to the farm. For finfish and shrimp, they must originate from a hatchery. For bivalve molluscs, seed may originate from a hatchery or be collected from the wild. Understanding that natural sets of bivalve mollusc seed can occur, the hatchery seed may be complemented by natural sets. AND;
- Producers have control of—either through ownership or leases—the area where they are farming. Harvesting molluscs, finfish, or shrimp in areas open to the public does not qualify as aquaculture and will be considered a wild-caught fishery. AND;
- Animals do not have to receive any added feed to be considered “farmed.”

### **Canned Tuna**

Additional requirements are in place for sourcing canned tuna (applicable to Whole Foods Market Grocery and Prepared Foods Departments). Canned tuna must be sourced according to the Whole Foods Market Canned Tuna Sourcing Policy:

[http://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/departments/seafood/Whole\\_Foods\\_Market\\_Canned\\_Tuna\\_Sourcing\\_Policy\\_102017.pdf](http://assets.wholefoodsmarket.com/www/departments/seafood/Whole_Foods_Market_Canned_Tuna_Sourcing_Policy_102017.pdf).