



What's New in BC

SPOTLIGHT ON BC : SEAFOOD

(OYSTERS, SABLEFISH, SPOT PRAWNS AND PINK SALMON)

SPRING 2010

SABLEFISH

Latin Name:

Anoplopoma fimbria

Other Common Names:

Black cod, Butterfish



Sablefish is a marine, cold-water fish that is now also a commercial aquaculture species in British Columbia. It is native to the Pacific Ocean and is one of the most valuable species harvested commercially on Canada's west coast.

There is division between stakeholders in BC regarding the development of a sablefish aquaculture sector. Those who oppose the development claim it will have a negative, irreversible effect in the global marketplace and the marine environment. Those in favour claim market potential will grow because of the increased supply and, when managed properly to minimize environmental effects, become a more sustainable fishery.

Sablefish is a sleek finfish with dark, almost furry skin and pearly white flesh. This species grows quickly with mature females reaching a minimum length of 55 cm (21.5 in) and an average length of 80 cm (31.5 in). Most of the commercially caught sablefish average between 2.7 kg (6 lbs) and 5.4 kg (12 lbs).

Fresh, frozen and smoked sablefish is available year round.

From 2007-2008, sales of frozen sablefish from BC were dramatically up to the United Arab Emirates (\$0 to \$127,409) and Italy (\$17,518 to \$165,050). In 2009, exports were valued at over \$19 million and shipped to ten countries. Japan remains the major importer receiving, on average (2004-2009), 84% of Canada's exported frozen sablefish. The United States was the second biggest importer at 7% and the United Kingdom was third at 4% in 2009.

BC Sablefish is regarded as one of the best choices of seafood by Monterey Bay Aquarium, Ocean Wise, and Seachoice. The grading of the fishery is based on abundance, management and caught or farmed in environmentally friendly way.

Wild sablefish suppliers:

<http://www.canadiansablefish.com/distributors.htm>

Farmed sablefish suppliers:

<http://kyuquotsound.com/contact.htm>

OYSTERS

Latin Name:

Crassostrea gigas

Other Common Names:

Japanese Oyster, Giant Oyster



In Canada, the Pacific oyster is farmed exclusively in British Columbia and is the most widely cultured oyster throughout the world. In 2008, 5,300 tonnes of Pacific oysters were produced in BC at a value of \$6.2 million.

While the Pacific oyster can grow to over 30 cm (12 in) it is normally harvested at 15 cm (6 in) or less. The average cultured Pacific oyster is harvested when it reaches between 8 and 10 cm (3-4 in) in length. There are three grades of oysters: choice, standard and commercial - with choice being the highest valued product. The shell and meat are both taken into account for these rankings. Cultured oysters are generally sold per count or by weight in varying sizes (extra small, small, medium and large).

Oysters are harvested year-round and, accordingly, are available throughout the year. They are particularly best raw during the fall and winter months because they spawn in the summer and, as a result, become softer and fattier during this time.

In 2009, nearly 90% of the \$10 million worth of Pacific oysters exported from British Columbia went to the United States and Hong Kong. Singapore was the third biggest importer of Pacific oysters at just over \$1 million.

The Pacific oyster industry has a new marketing campaign called, Pacific Kiss (www.pacifickiss.ca).

Farmed Pacific Oysters is considered one of the best seafood choices by Monterey Bay Aquarium, Ocean Wise and Seachoice. Wild Pacific Oysters is graded as one of the good alternatives by these same organizations.

Suppliers: <http://www.bcsqa.ca/about/bc-shellfish-processors>

SPOT PRAWNS

Latin Name:

Pandalus platyceros

Other Common Names:

Spot shrimp



Spot prawns are the largest of the seven commercial species of shrimp found in Canada's west coast waters with large females exceeding 23 cm in total length. Its body colour is usually reddish brown or tan, with white horizontal bars on the carapace (shell), and distinctive white spots on the first and fifth abdominal segments.

The spot prawn is known for its sweet, delicate flavour and firm texture.

Fresh and live prawns are available during the harvest season which usually starts in May and lasts approximately 80 days. Frozen prawns are available year round.

While some prawns are harvested live and sold as fresh and live, the majority of the catch, which is destined for export, is frozen at sea and then "finger packed". When "finger packed", the prawns are first dipped in a sulphite solution to improve colour and storage characteristics, then individually laid into a clean, white one kilogram box. All prawns are laid in the same direction and with all antennae tucked into the box which must remain unmarred.

In British Columbia, recent efforts have been exerted on developing a culture system for the spot prawn. From 2006-2008, the spot prawn was fished commercially at an annual rate of approximately 2500 tonnes with an average wholesale value of just under \$40 million.

There is no over-supply of spot prawns in the marketplace. Even though the availability of the product is dependant on seasonal limits of the capture fishery, which can be as long as six months or as short as 10 weeks, it is entirely absorbed by high demand. The major markets are Japan (84% of the \$44 million frozen, in shell commercial catch exported in 2009), the US (7%) and Taiwan (3%). This buoyant market in combination with uneven annual supply suggests that cultured prawns can occupy an important niche in the global seafood market.

It also has the best choice rating by Seachoice and Ocean Wise.

Suppliers: <http://www.bcseafood.ca/search/index.php>

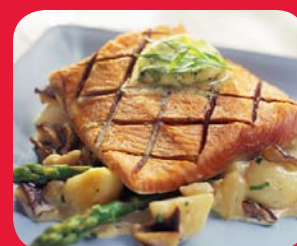
PINK SALMON

Latin Name:

Oncorhynchus gorbuscha

Other Common Names:

Humpback, Humpie



Pink salmon are the smallest of the five wild species with an average weight of approximately 2 kg (4 lbs), but can range between 1 kg (2 lbs) and 2.7 kg (6 lbs). It has a mild, delicate flavour and a softer texture than that of the other species.

Usually plentiful supplies of fresh pink salmon are available locally during its summer (July/August) harvest season. It is available frozen throughout the balance of the year. Canned and value-added products are available year-round. While it is possible to farm pink salmon, their historically low value and abundance in the wild have made farming impractical to date.

Most pink salmon is canned, in part because pinks are caught in huge volumes requiring rapid processing, and in part because the inexpensive price tag of canned pinks has kept consumer demand high worldwide. Some processors are experimenting with boneless, skinless pink fillets packed in a retort pouch, a variation on the shelf-stable can. An increasing amount of pink salmon is also entering fresh and frozen markets, often in the form of "roasts" (headed, gutted and tailed). Because of their low cost, pinks are often used to create value-added products, such as marinated fillets, hot dogs, patties and sausages. Processors not manufacturing these products themselves will put up 7.5 kg (16.5 lbs) fillet blocks for sale to re-processors. Pink salmon is also finding a niche in the smoked market where its sweet-tasting oil creates a unique and delicately flavoured product. As well, it is growing in popularity amongst several highly-regarded local chefs who claim it is an underutilized sustainable species in the foodservice industry.

The majority of fresh and frozen pink product is destined for local markets. In 2009, canned pink salmon exports, valued at \$15 million, were shipped to nineteen countries. The United Kingdom remains the major importer of British Columbia's canned pink salmon at 40% of the annual total pack. Belgium, Australia and New Zealand round out the top four importers at 20%, 15% and 9%, respectively.

For more information on the various species of Pacific salmon: <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/4804-eng.htm>

Seachoice gave best choice rating to BC wild salmon.

Suppliers: <http://www.bcseafood.ca/search/index.php>

DID YOU KNOW?

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL(MSC) In BC

The MSC fishery certification program and seafood ecolabel recognize and reward sustainable fishing. The MSC works with capture fisheries, seafood companies, scientists, conservation groups and the public to promote the best environmental choice in seafood. With these experts, the MSC developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. They ensure that MSC-labelled seafood comes from, and can be traced back to, a sustainable fishery.

CURRENT PROFILE:

Halibut, hake and albacore tuna, accounting for 32% of BC's commercially captured wild seafood, is now MSC-certified. MSC is the only eco-certification program that meets UN standards.

Presently, five additional fisheries are being assessed for MSC certification: sablefish, dogfish, pinks chum and sockeye salmon. If they become certified, a full 51% of BC's capture seafood would be MSC-certified as sustainable fisheries.

FISHING FOR MORE LINKS?

Discover BC's world leading groundfish management program:

<http://www.oceanfish.com/exportProducts/sustainablegroundfish.pdf>

Monitor the availability of various Canadian fisheries here:

<http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/fp.pdf>

Learn about Ocean Wise, the Vancouver Aquarium conservation program created to help restaurants and their customers make environmentally friendly seafood choices:

<http://www.vanaqua.org/oceanwise/index.html>



Ocean Wise



2008 BC SEAFOOD FAST FACTS

Number of Aquaculture Operations: 788

Number of Processing Facilities: 233

Number of Fishing Vessels: 3,200

Total Harvest (Tonnes): 253,100

Value of Harvest (\$ Millions): \$709.5

Value of Processed Seafood Products: \$1,216.3 million

Total Seafood Products Exported: 170,225 tonnes

Value of Exports: \$911.0 million



MEDIA MONITORING

LOCALS PROVIDE OLYMPIC SNACKS

The Citizen, Issue 1037
Wednesday, January 13, 2010
Sarah Simpson

When Cowichan's Alana Elliott, president of Nonuttin' Foods, dreamed up her allergy-friendly snack company in 2002 she didn't figure that within the decade she'd be feeding the world. She'd just wanted to give moms like her a safe granola bar option for their kids with allergies.

Two years later Nonuttin' Foods was officially launched.

"We've now been producing since August of 2004, just over five years now," she said.

From granola bars to trail mix, baking ingredients and fruit snacks, Elliott has it all.

And now it's time to share her wares, as she's signed on to supply almost 3,000 granola bars for the Official Broadcasting Centres in Vancouver and Whistler.

Safe to eat as they are not only peanut-free but also dairy-free, and include no barley, wheat or rye. Even kosher, the granola bars can feed many with special dietary needs.

And they ship well, too.

"They are already over there because our shelf life is long, they don't need to worry about bringing it in right before," she explained. "They actually ordered and received them in November 2008."

Aside from the feather in her cap of being an Olympic supplier, Elliott said she did make some money out of the deal.

"They did purchase it. It's not a donation," she said. "I'm happy."

But just like the start up of her company, getting an Olympic deal didn't happen overnight.

"It was quite a long process," Elliott explained. "It started literally I think at least two or three years ago. There were some different Olympic meetings that were being held both here and in Nanaimo that were teaching businesses how they could get something going with the Olympics so I started attending those."

Elliott quickly realized the businesses benefiting the most at that time were those dealing with construction but she still banked all the information she'd obtained.

"It gave me an understanding of what was going to be looked at so when it made sense for us being a food company, I registered on the 2010 Business Network."

She also attended a BC Foods Service conference hosted by Agriculture Canada specifically aimed to introduce those tasked with making the decisions regarding food at the Olympics to B.C. food suppliers.

Armed with the knowledge from previous meetings, Elliott had a leg up when it was time to actually do business with the Olympic organizers.

"We met quite a few different people there in different capacities and one of the people that I spoke to and followed up with was the manager for the Olympic Broadcasting Centres."

