# Ocean Disclosure Project 2017

**The Ocean Disclosure Project (ODP) represents a pioneering commitment to supply chain transparency from a range of companies sourcing products from the world's wild fisheries. Each ODP profile incorporates a clear-cut rating system based on stock status and management, information on fishing techniques used, and detailed environmental notes on the fishery's wider ecological impacts. This initiative offers an unparalleled opportunity for consumers, investors, and other stakeholders to make informed decisions about seafood.**

## Why do we need the Ocean Disclosure Project?

**Voluntary disclosure of sustainability performance data by the private sector has proven to be a powerful tool for driving change.** There have been generic approaches to this task (for instance the **Global Reporting Initiative**) as well as more focused sector-specific initiatives such as the **Carbon Disclosure Project** (now known as CDP). The public disclosure of sustainability performance data has allowed investors to better understand the risks in their portfolios, has stimulated companies to benchmark themselves against others, and has hugely increased public accountability.

Fresh mackerel.
© Katrina Borrow

**The Ocean Disclosure Project (ODP) is an attempt to bring a similar level of transparency to the world of sustainable seafood through encouraging companies to report on the sources of the seafood that they buy, along with information about the sustainability of those fisheries.** The ODP will therefore act as a reporting platform for those companies at the cutting edge of seafood sustainability, allowing them to demonstrate very high levels of corporate responsibility through complete transparency.

## What's reported?

**The ODP asks companies to disclose the specific wild fisheries that supply fish and shellfish to their business operations.** A fishery is defined as the fishing activity in a geographically specified area of water, targeting a particular species using a particular kind of fishing equipment ('gear'). The ODP does not cover seafood from aquaculture although it is planned to include farming operations in future years.

### Stock Status and Management

Once the list of fisheries has been received, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership uses data held on the public **Fishsource database** to identify gear type as well as the presence of ecolabel certifications or fishery improvement projects (FIPs). SFP also determines whether a fishery is 'well managed', 'managed' or 'needs improvement' using scores from the Fishsource database.


Sold here!
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### Environmental Impact

SFP also provides some notes on the environmental impact of the fishery based on examining relevant information regarding bycatch (non-target species caught by accident), the impact on protected, endangered and threatened (PET) species, and the impact on the seabed.

Creel-caught brown crab.
© Emma Pearson

### Want to know more?

Every ODP profile is linked to an entry on the Fishsource database via a web link on the fishery name. The Fishsource description of each fishery contains further information resources that may be of interest to users of the ODP.

Sometimes the Fishsource profile for a specific fishery has not yet been fully completed. In these instances the ODP entry will say 'Profile not yet complete'. SFP will endeavour to complete these profiles in the near future.

**Web: www.sustainablefish.org Email:info@sustainablefish.org**

# Categories Explained

## The fishery

This is defined as the area of water where the fishing activity occurs along with the target species and gear used. The name of the fishery has a link to the profile on the **Fishsource database** that can be used to discover further information.

## The country

This describes which country regulates the water where the fishing happens. Where fishing happens in international waters (the 'high seas') the 'country' refers to the nationality of the fishing boat.

## Fishing gear

This refers to the kind of equipment used to catch the fish. The following gears feature in the ODP:

**Purse seines –** Purse seining is used to capture large, dense shoals of far-ranging fish such as tuna, salmon and mackerel. A large circle of net is drawn around the shoal using a smaller, separate boat to the main vessel (a 'skiff'). This circular wall of net, enclosing the targeted fish, is then drawn together at the bottom, trapping the fish in a large 'purse'.


A purse-seine vessel targeting salmon.
© Katrina Borrow

**Seine nets –** Seine netting is a 'bottom fishing' method, used to capture fish which live near the sea floor, such as hake and plaice. Ropes known as 'warps' are laid out on the seabed, and then drawn together – herding fish into a seine net, set at the mid-length of the warp. In soft sediment areas, the movement of the warps across the seabed produces a sediment cloud that herds the fish towards the net. This technique produces a high-quality, undamaged catch, as the fish are not dragged along the seabed.

**Midwater trawls –** Also known as 'pelagic trawling', a trawl net is dragged through the middle of the water column in order to target large shoals of fish swimming there, such as seabass, mackerel, and herring. Midwater trawl nets are larger than bottom-trawl gear, with a large mouth. This allows a large volume of water to pass through the trawl, and enables the capture of large shoals.

Hauling in the trawl net.
© R. Rossignaud

**Bottom trawls –** Bottom trawls are large, cone-shaped nets with a wide 'mouth' held open by metal 'trawl doors' or 'otter boards', tapering to a narrow 'cod-end' where the catch aggregates. Fish herded into the net swim until exhausted, and then drift back into the closed 'cod-end' of the net. Selectivity in trawl nets can be determined by mesh size and shape.

**Long lines –** Fishing with long lines catches midwater (pelagic) and bottom-dwelling (demersal) species. Fishers set out a length of line to which they attach multiple shorter lines, with baited hooks. Depending on the fish being targeted, the lines can be set in the water column, or weighted and run along the sea floor. Hook and bait types will also vary depending on target species.

Although long lines are more selective in the capture of fish than some other gears, there can be significant issues with bycatch, often of seabirds. Birds may

attempt to eat the bait from the baited hooks, and then become entangled in the line, or caught on the hook, and drown. However, innovative bycatch mitigation measures are being developed in long lines fisheries around the world.

**Hooks and lines –** Hook and line fishing is a general term for fishing methods which employ short lengths of line, with fish hooks attached. This can be done either by hand, or by mechanised, powered reels. Hook and line fishing can be used to target a range of species from different habitats, from cuttlefish to tuna. Hook and line is a relatively selective type of fishing, as fish are caught individually and reeled in quickly – meaning that any unwanted bycatch can be immediately returned to the sea.

Hook and line fishing can be done by hand, or mechanically.
© Katrina Borrow

**Pots and traps –** Pots (also known as creels) are small baited traps used to target a range of species – often crustaceans, but also including some fish species and molluscs (e.g. squid, octopus). Baited pots are set out along a line dropped to the seabed which then trap target species inside the thick mesh cage. Potting is highly selective, as the catch is brought up to the vessel alive and any unwanted bycatch can be returned unharmed to the sea. Traditionally, pots were made of willow, but modern pots tend to be constructed from nylon-covered or galvanized wire, making them extremely durable.

Pots used to catch lobster and crab.
© Emma Pearson

**Dredges –** Dredging is used to capture bivalve molluscs (e.g. oysters, scallops and clams) from the seabed. A dredge consists of a heavy metal 'chain belly', or basket, which is dragged along the seabed, attached to a metal bar. The bar may or may not have 'teeth'. The metal bar, or teeth, dig the molluscs up from the seabed; the molluscs are then passed back into the chain basket as the catch is hauled in. The number and size of dredges dragged by each boat depends on the size of the vessel and regional fishery regulations. The weight and nature of the fishing gear means that this method has a high impact on the benthic habitat (sea bed).

Dredges are used to catch molluscs, such as scallops.
© Katrina Borrow

**Gillnets –** Gillnets are vertical panels of net, which float in the water column, and catch fish by entangling their gills. These nets are used to target a range of species swimming through the water column, including salmon. Selectivity of gillnets is determined by a range of factors, including mesh size, twine strength, and net length and depth. Gillnets include a weighted 'foot rope' along the bottom and a 'headline' with floats, to hold the net vertical in the water column.

**Rake/hand-gathered –** Rake or hand gathering is used to collect shellfish and crustaceans directly from the seabed or coastal areas. Species such as scallops, abalone and lobsters may be individually collected by divers by hand, whilst some shellfish can be collected from intertidal areas using a spade or rake. This is a very low impact fishing method, with zero bycatch.

**Pole & line –** Pole and line fishing is a low impact, traditional fishing method, in which fishers use just one hook and one line to catch fish one by one. Fishers throw live bait into the water to attract fish such as tuna, which are then caught individually as they swim to the water's surface. Pole and line fishing results in very low bycatch.

## Certifications

Where a fishery is referred to as 'certified' it means that it has been certified by one of several third party ecolabel certification schemes. The fisheries in the ODP are not necessarily part of a 'chain of custody certification' (which offers a third party check on traceability) so the profile does not make any claims for specific certification programmes.

## Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)

A fishery indicated as belonging to a fishery improvement project means that there is a structured program in place for making improvements. SFP also offers a rating for the FIP which assesses progress, with A representing the best and E representing the worst. A full definition of FIP ratings can be found **here**.

## Stock Status and Management

SFP determines whether a fishery is 'well managed', 'managed' or 'needs improvement' based on the scores held on each Fishsource profile. There are five Fishsource scores which range from 0 to 10 and assess the quality of the management and the status of the fish stock. The methodology behind the scores can be found at Fishsource. The categories are defined as:

**'Well managed'** = a fishery that is very well managed (all Fishsource scores are 8 or above)

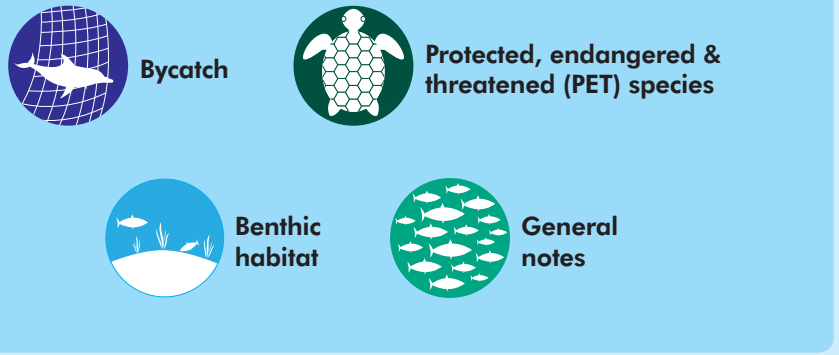
**'Managed'** = a fishery that is competently managed but should be making some efforts to improve (all Fishsource scores are 6 or above)

**'Needs improvement'** = a fishery that requires significant improvement (at least one Fishsource score is less than 6)

Any fishery that is described as 'certified' is automatically considered to be 'well managed' regardless of Fishsource scores.

## Environmental Notes

SFP has provided some notes on the environmental impact of the fisheries based on examining relevant information regarding bycatch (non-target species caught by accident), the impact on protected, endangered and threatened (PET) species, the physical impact on the seabed and any wider effects on the marine ecosystem. All of the text comes from the relevant profiles on **Fishsource** and further information, along with full scientific references, can be found **here**.




# Conclusion

**The Ocean Disclosure Project represents the ultimate in corporate transparency around sustainable seafood and an indicator of highly responsible behaviour by participating companies.** The annual publication of company profiles provides valuable information to the public, consumers, investors and other businesses that establishes very high levels of trust in corporate performance and disclosure and clear metrics regarding sustainable business practices. SFP hopes that in future years other companies will agree to participate in the ODP and that it will expand to become the standard sustainability reporting tool for seafood businesses worldwide.