

Consumer Choices

Grade: 9-12

Subject: Social Studies

Duration: One – three lessons

Objectives

It is expected that students will:

- Identify and discuss the issue of sustainable fishing
- Research a seafood product available in their community
- Assess and defend a position about whether a seafood product for sale in their community is sustainable

Overview and Background Information

Seafood is an increasingly global industry – many of the seafood products sold in Canada are caught in other countries or in international waters. Although some fisheries are well managed, experts are warning that many fish populations, including some in Canada, are at risk of collapse.

This lesson encourages students to learn about local and global fishing practices, as well as how these methods impact various species and their environment.

Procedures

Part 1 – Fishing Methods

Students:

1. Compare and contrast different fishing methods used in Canada and throughout the world. Use at least two credible sources to learn about each method. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's *Seafood Watch* program is a one place to start.
http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/cr_seafoodwatch/sfw_gear.asp
2. Discuss the results.

Part 2 – Sustainable Seafood

Students:

1. Work in small groups to discuss and draft a working definition of the term "sustainable seafood".
2. Compare your definition with those of the other groups and to the definition included below. Revise and refine.

Part 3 – Field Work

Students:

1. Investigate a seafood product for sale at a local restaurant or grocery store. Judge whether or not you consider the product sustainable. Justify your answer. Use the *Sustainable Seafood Community Investigation* worksheet below.

Materials and Resources

- Computer and Internet connection
- *Definition of Sustainable Seafood*
- Blackline master: *Sustainable Seafood Community Investigation*

Extensions

- Read the rockfish section of the *Conservation in Action* website. Investigate the threats facing rockfish populations on Canada’s Pacific Coast and the steps being taken to protect them.
- Compare and contrast websites and programs that encourage consumers to buy sustainable seafood. How are their recommendations similar? How do they differ?
- Discuss whether consumers can influence fishing practices. Research the dolphin-friendly tuna campaign. Is this working? What are the pros and cons of buying dolphin-friendly tuna?
- Investigate the fishing industry’s approach to sustainable fishing. Find examples of innovations made by the fishing industry to decrease by-catch and protect habitats.

Evaluation

Use the following to assess student work:

Part 1 – Fishing Methods

Sample Criteria – Research Skills	
To what extent did the student:	
1. use reference aids (e.g., indexes, card catalogues, online search tools) appropriately	5 4 3 2 1 0
2. use a graphic organizer (e.g., web charts, diagrams, "pro and con" charts) to record his/her findings	5 4 3 2 1 0

Part 2 – Sustainable Seafood

Sample Criteria – Critical Thinking Skills	
To what extent did the student:	
1. think carefully about the issue and consider other perspectives	5 4 3 2 1 0
2. question the soundness of his/her interpretations	5 4 3 2 1 0
3. consider evidence against his/her views and to revise these views should the evidence warrant	5 4 3 2 1 0

Part 3 – Field Work

Sample Criteria – Research & Critical Thinking Skills	
To what extent did the student:	
1. use a graphic organizer (e.g., web charts, diagrams, "pro and con" charts) to record his/her findings	5 4 3 2 1 0
2. question the soundness of his/her interpretations	5 4 3 2 1 0
3. defend a particular point of view	5 4 3 2 1 0

Definition of Sustainable Seafood

This definition of sustainable seafood comes from the *Ocean Wise* program.
www.oceanwisecanada.org

Sustainable seafood can be defined as:

1. A species that is **abundant** and **resilient** to fishing pressures;
2. A species that is **well managed** with a comprehensive management plan based on current research;
3. A species that is harvested in a method that ensures **limited bycatch** on non-target and endangered species;
4. A species for which the method of catch ensures there is **limited habitat loss** associated with the harvesting method.

Sustainable Seafood Community Investigation

1. Name of grocery store, market or restaurant.
2. List all the seafood products for sale.
3. From the list of seafood products, select one seafood item to research in-depth. Describe the product (name; fresh, frozen or canned; brand name or other label, menu or sign information, etc.)
4. Try to find out where was this animal was caught. The staff may know, especially for fresh seafood. If not, try the Internet.
5. Search the Internet to find out the other names this animal may be called. For example, Chilean sea bass is also known as Patagonian toothfish.
6. Use the Internet to learn as much as you can about the fishery for this species. Use a graphic organizer like the one below to record your findings.

Facts that support this product as sustainable	Facts that support this product as unsustainable

7. Based on the information you have, does this item meet your criteria for a sustainable seafood product? Why or why not?
8. What other information would you like to know about this seafood?