

Greenpeace's sustainable seafood campaign: Achievements with European supermarkets by June 2008

Background

Since 2005, Greenpeace has campaigned for European supermarkets to sell only sustainable seafood. This paper reviews the key achievements of the campaign to date. For more detailed information on a particular country or fish species please visit the relevant websites (the URLs are listed at the end of the document).

October 2005: Greenpeace UK publishes a league table ranking UK supermarkets on the basis of their seafood sourcing policies – this lays the ground-work for Greenpeace's sustainable seafood campaign.

2006: Greenpeace France and Greenpeace in Central & Eastern Europe (Greenpeace CEE) join the campaign.

May 2006: Greenpeace CEE publishes a report ranking the seafood purchasing policies of Austrian supermarkets.

2007: Greenpeace Germany and Greenpeace Netherlands join the campaign.

September 2007: Greenpeace Netherlands publishes its first ranking of the top 18 Dutch supermarkets.

December 2007: Greenpeace Germany publishes a ranking of top German supermarkets.

2008: Greenpeace Nordic joins the campaign.

January 2008: Greenpeace Nordic publishes a ranking in Denmark.

March 2008: Greenpeace Nordic publishes rankings in Sweden and Norway.

May 2008: Significant improvements by Swedish supermarkets in a very short time mean that, just two months later, the ranking is updated.

Supermarkets in all eight countries have started to adapt their fish purchasing policies. Many retailers have developed sustainable fish purchasing guidelines and, as a minimum, most companies have delisted (stopped selling) a number of overfished or destructively-fished species. Some retailers have even delisted all red-listed products.

Sustainable seafood policies

Germany

In Germany, in 2007, four supermarkets (**Norma, REWE, Kaufland, and Netto**) developed sustainable seafood procurement policies. Norma came first in the German ranking, followed by Kaufland. All German supermarkets except Bunting, which came last, scored in the mid-range. This means that, while they had taken good measures towards sourcing sustainable seafood, there is still much more to be done. German supermarket **Edeka** changed its own brand products (frozen and canned) completely to Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified ones, and delisted all tuna products except skipjack.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, eight supermarkets adopted and published seafood sourcing policies that take sustainability concerns into account to a varying degree. They do not always extend to all products in the ranges of these supermarkets. Greenpeace still sees room for improvement of these policies, but acknowledges that significant progress has been made. **Em-Te** and **Golff** (Sligro Food Group) currently lead when it comes to the level of sustainability of their seafood purchasing policy, which covers almost all of their seafood products. This policy has also been made accessible to their customers. They have developed concrete requirements for their seafood and have clear goals to achieve a sustainable assortment of seafood.

Norway

In 2006, Greenpeace exposed an illegal cod fishing scandal in the Barents Sea. This sparked moves by all Norwegian supermarkets to develop seafood purchasing guidelines to avoid sourcing illegally-caught fish.

The two retailers leading the Norwegian retailer ranking list, **Smartclub** and **ICA (Royal Ahold)**, developed additional comprehensive policies to cover their entire seafood ranges.

Sweden

In Sweden, all companies actively work with sustainable seafood purchasing policies. **Bergendahlsgruppen** and **Axfood** have the most developed sustainable policies, closely followed by **ICA (Royal Ahold)**. Their policies have led to delisting of all 14 products on Greenpeace Nordic's red list. All retailers except **Co-op** agreed to delist all red-listed products. Some Swedish retailers reported a record number of customer requests demanding sustainable seafood policies, more feedback than they have ever received on any issue.

United Kingdom

In the UK, the nine largest supermarket chains included in the Greenpeace UK league table have now adopted seafood procurement policies. These take, to varying degrees, sustainability into account as a key criterion when purchasing fish products. **Marks & Spencer** and **Waitrose** have the most developed policies, leading the table in both the first ranking and the follow-up ranking published in October 2006.

Walmart subsidiary **Asda** ranked last in the initial UK league table. In January 2006, it adopted a comprehensive sustainable seafood policy. It then moved up to fifth place in the second UK ranking. Asda's new policy led to the immediate delisting of Dover sole, lumpfish, dogfish, skate and swordfish. Later in the year, Asda stopped selling any North Sea cod in its fresh, pre-packed chilled and frozen ranges. Asda also committed to selling only MSC-certified fresh and frozen fish within five years.

Transparency

Transparency is key to the development of sustainable seafood procurement policies. As well as the details of their procurement policies, a number of companies have provided an extensive overview of their seafood ranges to Greenpeace. In the best cases for each species sold this information includes both the common name and the Latin species name, the FAO (major fishing areas as defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation¹) catch area, the port the catch was landed in, the day it was caught, the stock it came from, and the fishing method used to catch it.

Lists of seafood on offer in stores, with varying levels of detail, have been provided to Greenpeace by the supermarkets Hofer (Austrian subsidiary of Aldi), Lidl, Norma and others in **Austria**; Kaufland, Lidl, Norma, Rewe, Edeka, Netto provided detailed information on their product range and policies in **Germany**; 12 of the 18 ranked supermarkets in the **Netherlands** provided (to varying degrees) an overview of their seafood ranges; all chains in **Sweden** except Netto provided detailed information on their policies and their product range; and all nine **UK** supermarkets on the ranking provided Greenpeace with information on their seafood ranges.

Labelling and traceability

Austria

Hofer (Aldi) and Norma in Austria improved their labelling. **Norma** developed a completely new 'transparent fisheries' logo, launched in May 2007. This provides the Latin species name, catch area, catch method and catch day on each of its frozen products. Norma claims the label guarantees the full traceability of the product back to the ship. Since the end of 2006, its competitor **Hofer** has provided the Latin species name in addition to the information requested by EU law (common name, FAO catch area, wild or farmed) on its frozen fish products.

Labelling of **Rewe's** own brand's 'Quality First' frozen seafood products (including breaded fish products) has exceeded the legal requirements in Austria since March 2005. The labels display the Latin species name as well as the exact FAO fishing area by name, rather than by code, according to the batch.

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, 11 supermarkets made improvements in their labelling for part of their range. **Albert Heijn (Ahold)** labels its fresh own-brand products with the common name, Latin name, catch area and whether the product is wild-caught or farmed. In addition it provides information about the sustainability of its own-brand fish and publishes its policy on its website and in its magazine. Albert Heijn claims "*we work towards sustainable fisheries*" on all fresh own-brand products, showing which segment is covered by its sustainable policy. However, unsustainable products are also labelled in this way, so information can be misleading to customers.

Em-Te and **Golff** (Sligro Food Group) improved the labelling of their own-brand fresh products, providing the common name, Latin name, specific catch area and catch method. Since February 2008, they have provided additional "red-amber-green" colour-coded information in their shops (a poster and WWF/North Sea Foundation fish guide). **Super de Boer** improved the labelling of most of its own-brand fresh fish products, providing the common name, Latin name, catch area/aquaculture country. **Deen** and **Jumbo** are currently working on improvements to their seafood labelling.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/fishery/area/search>

Dekamarkt, Coop, Jan Linders and Hoogvliet all improved the labelling of (part) of their fresh own-brand including the common name, Latin name, catch area/country of aquaculture and catch method /details on the type of aquaculture.

Norway

Frozen seafood products in several Norwegian supermarkets is labelled with FAO catch area, species name, processing country and processing plant. Almost all fresh fish caught in Norwegian waters by Norwegian boats is traceable back to the boat.

United Kingdom

In the UK, supermarkets improved their labelling, especially on fish counters and for packaged fresh fish. In cases where the seafood is from a single source, the common name, catch area and country of origin, or farm and farm location, is often supplied. Catch method is increasingly being labelled on line-caught products, for example, line-caught Icelandic cod or pole-and-line caught Pacific yellowfin tuna. **Waitrose** provides more detail about the origin of its seafood on its website. In October 2006, **Morrison's** became the first UK supermarket to include the Latin name on its fish counter labels and pre-packed fish, and its wide range of line-caught fish is also clearly labelled.

Delistings of threatened species

A number of supermarkets around Europe delisted some or all of the most threatened species identified by Greenpeace for that country. In Sweden, eight out of nine retailers cancelled their contracts for all 14 of the species on the Greenpeace Nordic red list. This includes European eel, cod, beam and bottom-trawled plaice, Atlantic and Greenland halibut, tuna from threatened stocks, redfish, sole, shark, skate, ray, anglerfish, wild Atlantic salmon from threatened stocks, swordfish, marlin and tropical shrimps.

Key examples for delistings are:

- **Sharks and dogfish**

When the campaign started in **Austria** in May 2006, **shark** products were sold in six Austrian retail/wholesale chains. All of them delisted shark products by spring 2007. This includes the international chains Metro and Spar. In the **UK**, Asda, Co-op, Sainsbury's, Somerfield and Morrison's delisted **dogfish**, a small species of shark, and in Germany, Kaufland and Rewe did the same. Lidl in Germany delisted all shark products.

- **Swordfish and marlin**

Another key threatened species delisted around Europe as a result of the campaign was **swordfish**. In **Austria**, the international chains Rewe, Spar and Metro stopped selling swordfish, as did Asda and Somerfield in the **UK**, and C1000, Jumbo, Dekamarkt and Dirk van den Broek in the **Netherlands**. Jumbo and Dirk van den Broek also stopped selling **marlin**. In Norway, ICA (Royal Ahold) delisted both marlin and swordfish.

- **Skates and rays**

Skates and rays were widely sold in **UK** supermarkets at the start of the campaign. Asda, Co-op, Sainsbury's, and Somerfield have now delisted them. Morrison's, Tesco and Waitrose delisted all skate species except starry, spotted and cuckoo rays. Waitrose is now funding the production and distribution of a skate and ray identification card, including information on minimum and maximum landing sizes, in

order to help fishermen, anglers and producers avoid the most vulnerable and overfished species. ICA (Royal Ahold) in **Norway** stopped selling skates.

- **Atlantic cod and haddock**

There have been significant movements on **Atlantic cod** and **haddock** in the last three years. In the **UK**, Asda stopped selling any cod caught in the North Sea – the last supermarket in the UK to do so. Both smoked and chilled (uncoated) cod and haddock fillets sold by Marks & Spencer come from fish line-caught in Icelandic waters. Sainsbury's only sells line-caught fresh cod and haddock, primarily from Iceland with a small range from Norway. As yet this policy does not cover frozen fish. The supermarket chain ICA (Royal Ahold) stopped selling frozen Eastern Baltic cod in **Sweden** and **Norway**. Lidl and Rewe in **Germany** have now delisted Baltic cod and Edeka delisted North Sea and Baltic cod. In the **Netherlands**, Albert Heijn, Jan Linders, Jumbo, Em-Te, Golff, Plus, Co-op, Dekamarkt, Spar and Deen replaced (part of) their North Sea fresh cod with cod from Iceland and the Barents Sea (longline or trawler). Dirk van den Broek stopped sourcing Iglo Baltic cod.

- **Tuna**

The supermarket chain Metro, third largest grocery retailer globally and the biggest fish trader in Europe (according to company information), placed signs in its **Austrian** shops in December 2006 stating that it does not sell any **northern or southern bluefin tuna** or bigeye tuna "*for reasons of protection of species*". The retail chain Co-op stopped selling bluefin tuna in Italy in April 2007. In **Norway**, the supermarket chain ICA (Royal Ahold) stopped selling bluefin tuna. Carrefour stopped selling bluefin in **Italy** and **Spain** and will do so in **France** in 2009. Auchan also stopped selling bluefin tuna in France.

In the **Netherlands**, Em-Te, Golff and Super de Boer stopped selling fresh **yellowfin tuna** steaks. Spar stopped sourcing a fresh yellowfin tuna product (filet Americain). Jumbo stopped stocking canned yellowfin tuna. Jan Linders, Plus, Coop, Dekamarkt Hoogvliet stopped sourcing fresh albacore tuna steak (*Thunnus alalunga* - longline – Indian Ocean). ICA in **Sweden** has decided to delist yellowfin tuna, but may reconsider if it finds a sustainable fishery from the Atlantic. Lidl in **Germany** delisted longline-caught yellowfin tuna. Hofer (Aldi South) in **Austria** stopped selling canned yellowfin tuna, it now only sells canned skipjack tuna.

- **Tropical shrimps**

Dutch supermarkets Plus, Jumbo, Coop, Dirk van den Broek and Deen have reduced the amount of **tropical shrimp** in their stores, by removing one or more products from their selections.

- **Deep sea species**

Several supermarket chains delisted a number of **deep sea species**: Groupe Casino (**France**) stopped buying blue ling and roundnose grenadier. In the **UK**, Waitrose no longer sources any fish caught by deep-water trawling and Morrison's delisted ling. The **Austrian** regional supermarket chain MPreis stopped selling all deep sea species.

- **Eel**

In **Denmark** Aldi, Rema1000 and Spar stopped selling **eel**, as did the supermarket chain ICA (Royal Ahold) in **Norway** and Kaufland in **Germany**.

In Sweden, Willys, Hemköp, City Gross, AG, ICA (at least, from its central product range) delisted European eel.

Avoiding destructive fisheries – beam trawling

In the **UK**, a number of companies are working on reducing the amount of **beam-trawled seafood** they sell. Marks & Spencer reduced the percentage of beam-trawled flatfish it purchases from 55% in 2004 to 47% in 2005, and then to 35% in August 2006 – a reduction of over one-third. The beam trawlers still in use are smaller and use less fuel. Marks & Spencer phased out all beam-trawled species except Dover sole. In December 2006, the UK supermarket Iceland cut the amount of beam-trawled seafood it sells by 50%. Morrison's removed all beam-trawled products from its fresh fish ranges and has only one remaining product containing beam-trawled plaice.

Austrian Hofer only sources plaice sold in Austria, from the only FAO sub-fishing area in which ICES has ascertained that the population is fully reproducing. The discount chain Lidl removed plaice from its product range entirely in Austria.

All supermarkets in the **Netherlands** have committed themselves to not selling plaice caught during the spawning period (December-March). Several supermarkets are looking into more sustainable alternatives such as pulskor and flyshooting.

Dekamarkt stopped sourcing sole from beam trawling and changed to sourcing from sole aquaculture. Jumbo, Em-Te, Golff, Dirk van den Broek, Plus and Super de Boer (fresh house-brand) stopped selling (juvenile) beam-trawled sole. Albert Heijn sources MSC Hasting sole if available. Dekamarkt switched to farmed sole. Jan Linders, Em-Te, Golff, Plus, Coop, Dekamarkt, Hoogvliet and Spar stopped sourcing fresh beam-trawled North Sea plaice. Jumbo is switching to a more sustainable fishing technique.

Norwegian Smartclub have a policy of avoiding beam-trawled seafood and is actively promoting alternatives to bottom-trawled seafood (northern shrimps and Norwegian lobsters caught with pots).

Beam and bottom-trawled plaice and nephrops have been delisted by eight out of nine **Swedish** retailers.

Roadmap to sustainability for Dutch supermarkets

The Dutch Supermarket Branche Organisation (CBL) published a roadmap for sustainable fish procurement for Dutch supermarkets in December 2007. The roadmap shows seven steps towards a more sustainable seafood assortment for almost all supermarkets:

1. All freshly caught fish must **comply with MSC standards** as of 2011.
2. Within six months the CBL, together with the government, suppliers and civil society organisations, will **publish a green list of fish species** that can be caught and sold in a responsible manner.
3. **Stop destructive fishing practices.** Some catch methods lead to damage of the seafloor and ecosystems. Other side effects of destructive fishing practices are high fossil fuel use and bycatch. These all have to be reduced.
4. **Reduce bycatch.** Bycatch must be reduced, by adjusting fishing practices, to the unavoidable absolute minimum.
5. The sustainability of fish farming will be improved with **GlobalGAP**. The suppliers of farmed fish will have to adhere to GlobalGAP norms as of 2009.
6. Attention to the **well being of fish** during farming and catching.

7. **Ban illegally-caught fish.** Supermarkets do not want to sell illegally-caught fish. The CBL wants to improve the traceability of fish to further help the government ban illegally caught fish.

For more information, visit the Greenpeace seafood website:

<http://seafood.greenpeace.org>

National Greenpeace office seafood sites:

Austria – http://marktcheck.greenpeace.at/fisch_in_seenot.html

Germany

-http://www.greenpeace.de/themen/meere/nachrichten/artikel/nachhaltig_gefangen_erstes_supermarktranking_fisch/

The Netherlands – <http://www.maakschoenschap.nl/Default.asp>

Norway - <http://www.greenpeace.org/norway/sea-the-future/>

Denmark – <http://www.greenpeace.org/denmark/sea-the-future/>

Sweden - <http://www.greenpeace.org/sweden/sea-the-future/>

United Kingdom - <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/seafood-seelife/seafood-seelife>