



## Ocean Wildlife and Sainsbury's Seafood Supply Chain

### Sainsbury's and Seafood Sustainability

Sainsbury's make good food joyful, accessible and affordable for everyone, every day.

Offering delicious, great quality food at competitive prices has been at the heart of what we do since our first store opened in 1869. Today, inspiring and delighting our customers with tasty food remains our priority.

Protecting marine ecosystems is a major global challenge. To make sure our customers can still enjoy this primary renewable source of protein, we are working with our suppliers to ensure that all the fish we sell is independently certified as sustainable/responsible – whether it's wild-caught or farmed.

Sainsbury's welcomes the evaluation of risks to marine endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species from fisheries bycatch and will take action to address the issues that have been identified. Sainsbury's will continue to collaborate with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP), Birdlife International, and Whale and Dolphin Conservation to identify and address issues in the future and ensure, through procurement policies and other measures, that the company's seafood supply chain does not present unacceptable threats to marine wildlife.

### Fisheries and Bycatch

Bycatch, the catch of non-target species, is one of the most significant issues affecting the biological sustainability of marine fisheries. In particular, bycatch of endangered, threatened, and protected (ETP) species continues at a global and ecologically significant scale, despite an increase in the number of certified fisheries and improvement projects, and public attention to this issue.

Fisheries bycatch is a primary driver of population decline in many ETP species. These populations are at very low levels and are formally listed as endangered, threatened, or protected by international, national, and/or local jurisdictions.

Sharks and rays, seabirds, marine mammals, and sea turtles, all of which are ecologically important to ocean habitats, are at high risk of capture and harm in commercial fisheries. Many of these species are distributed across large geographic areas and overlap multiple fisheries. Many also have life-history characteristics that make them vulnerable to fishing-related



mortality, such as slow growth, long reproductive cycles, and production of small numbers of offspring.

**One-third of the world's sharks and rays** are threatened with extinction.

**15 of the 22 species of albatross** are threatened with extinction.

**Less than 350 North Atlantic right whales** remain in the world.

Fisheries bycatch is recognized as the greatest threat to **all seven species of sea turtles**.

### **Bycatch Audit of the Sainsbury's Supply Chain**

[Sustainable Fisheries Partnership \(SFP\)](#), in conjunction with Birdlife International and Whale and Dolphin Conservation, conducted a review and assessment of the fisheries [disclosed by Sainsbury's in the Ocean Disclosure Project](#).

The three organizations collaborated to develop criteria to identify fisheries that could be considered high risk for interactions with sharks and rays, seabirds, marine mammals, and sea turtles.

These criteria include:

- The conservation status of the relevant bycatch species, as determined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Bycatch rate and evidence of impact at a population level, or high likelihood of bycatch, based on gear type and overlap with susceptible species
- Scale of the specific bycatch problem, e.g., across the world versus limited to one fishery
- Whether the fisheries impact species with a very small range
- Whether the fisheries include cross-taxa bycatch



- Whether Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification has been suspended due to non-compliance with elements of Principle 2 in the MSC Standard.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

The audit identified the fisheries in the Sainsbury's supply chain that present the highest bycatch risks to sharks and rays, seabirds, marine mammals, and sea turtles. Sainsbury's understands that the issues identified in the audit signal a need to fully address risks to ETP species across all of its sourcing and commits to working with suppliers to improve fishery management and implement recommended actions.

The risk assessment conducted as part of the audit demonstrates a range of potential bycatch impacts to ETP species from the fisheries that supply Sainsbury's. The audit identified a number of the fisheries as having the highest potential bycatch risk. A full list of these fisheries will be incorporated into the Sainsbury's Ocean Disclosure Project (ODP) profile.

SFP reviewed the results of the audit with Sainsbury's to determine where they can have the most impact by encouraging improvements to reduce ETP bycatch. The following are the top findings of this analysis and the fisheries where Sainsbury's should prioritize action:

- Alaska salmon set/drift gillnet fisheries pose a significant risk to seabirds.
- Icelandic cod/haddock trawl and longline fisheries pose a significant risk to seabirds and marine mammals.
- Canadian (American) lobster and UK brown crab pot and trap fisheries pose a risk to marine mammals.

While the primary purpose of the audit was to identify fisheries where there are bycatch risks, it revealed broad and proactive actions by Sainsbury's to promote healthy fisheries and protect marine biodiversity. For example:

- Sainsbury's tuna sourcing comes from fisheries with healthy stocks and that use techniques, such as pole and line, that have very minimal bycatch impacts and/or impacts on habitat.



- There were very few fisheries with threats to sea turtles or sharks and rays. The Sainsbury's supply chain specifically avoids fishery products from fisheries that have high population-level impacts on sea turtles, such as pelagic longline fisheries in the Pacific Ocean. They also do not source from purse seine fisheries that use fish aggregating devices, which can have negative impacts on these species.

A number of common themes also emerged from the analysis. These were presented to Sainsbury's with the following key recommendations, for work with their suppliers across various fisheries:

- Levels of bycatch monitoring are generally poor, and there is a need to adopt higher levels of observer coverage.
- There is an urgent need for a significant increase in the levels of bycatch incident reporting (which should be regular, detailed, and standardized). Data on bycatch needs to be placed in the public domain and be available to all stakeholders.
- There is minimal effort to continuously improve bycatch reduction. Bycatch mitigation should aim to adopt best practices at all times
- There is a clear need for a systematic examination of alternative gear options in fisheries where there are high bycatch risks, e.g., move away from gillnet fisheries.