

RAPSTA OVERVIEW FOR PARTNERS

Ocean Wise Fisheries and Seafood Initiative, February 2023

RAPSTA Introduction

Currently, Canadian fisheries catch accounts for less than 6% of total seafoods rated by Ocean Wise, suggesting Canadians lack the information needed to make informed decisions about domestic seafood based on sustainability. One significant contributor to this gap is the high cost and time commitment required to conduct full assessments on fisheries of any size.

Recognizing cost and time as barriers for Canadian fisheries to be included in national and international sustainability programs, Ocean Wise is releasing a new methodology for rapidly assessing the sustainability performance of previously unassessed fisheries using existing data sets. This new methodology will provide an additional 135 seafood ratings for the Ocean Wise program. This means the inclusion of 17 new [Ocean Wise Recommended options](#).

This methodology is called [RAPSTA – Rapid Assessment Standard for Canadian Fisheries](#) – and was generated using existing data from [Oceana Canada](#) and the [Seafood Watch](#) program of the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Since 2017, Oceana Canada has published an annual Fishery Audit, which brings together measures of target stock (aka. fish population) health for 230 fish stocks across the country and is the most comprehensive publicly available database of its kind for Canadian fisheries.

Methods Overview

Two data sets were used for RAPSTA: the publicly available 2022 Oceana Fishery Audit and Ocean Wise Canadian ratings database (December 2022). Since the Seafood Watch standard includes criteria for target stocks as well as gear impacts, we paired the two databases together to obtain all possible Stock-Species-Location-Gear combinations. Filters for each criterion (C1-4) were then added to the paired data in order to generate individual scores for; Species Health and Abundance (C1), Bycatch (C2), Management Effectiveness (C3), and Impact of Habitat (C4). Species abundance and management effectiveness were assigned scores according to the Seafood Watch standard based on corresponding data points in the Fishery Audit database. For example, Species Abundance as determined based on a fisheries Stock Status: Healthy, Cautious, Uncertain, or Critical. Bycatch and Habitat scores were calculate based on the average score for Location-Gear combinations of existing Ocean Wise ratings. The geometric average was then taken across criteria to determine the final score and produce the corresponding recommendation status (<2.8 = Not Recommended; >2.8 = Ocean Wise Recommended).

How These Ratings Work

Ratings produced through the RAPSTA methodology have a couple key characteristics that make them different from other Ocean Wise ratings derived from Seafood Watch assessments. This includes that the recommendations are updated annually, and thus are potentially subject to change annually.

Ocean Wise Symbol

The Ocean Wise symbol **next to a seafood item** or at the fish counter is your assurance that the option is a good choice for the health of our ocean. Only products that have been rated Ocean Wise Recommended can carry the Ocean Wise Seafood symbol. Seafoods rated through the RAPSTA methodology must adhere to rules of the program. This includes:

- Use of the Ocean Wise Recommended symbol must be associated only with those products listed on the most recent Ocean Wise Seafood Audit which have been indicated by Ocean Wise as Recommended.
- Specific requirements for all partners are outlined in the [Ocean Wise Brand Guide](#).
- Before publishing Ocean Wise branding on any menus, product packaging or media assets, the partner must provide a proof of symbol use to be approved by Ocean Wise. This includes all public relations and marketing materials.
- Substitutions or additions of seafood items must be verified by the Ocean Wise team before the branding is applied. Failure to do so may result in a non-compliance notice.

If You Are a Business

Ocean Wise Seafood Partners are encouraged to connect with their Ocean Wise Seafood representative to get these products included on their Seafood Audit. Once verified by their Ocean Wise representative, businesses may market any Ocean Wise Recommended options as listed through the RAPSTA. Please be aware that products which are Recommended one year may not be the following year when the rating is updated (and at that time no new product can be marketed as Ocean Wise Recommended with the symbol or otherwise). Prospective partners interested in joining the Ocean Wise program are encouraged to sign up on our [website](#).

For more information about RAPSTA and the results for 2023:

See link to [Summary of RAPSTA Results Table](#)

See link to full [RAPSTA Report 2023](#)