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SEAFOOD CONSUMPTION INCREASES IN 2006

Americans ate 16.5 pounds of fish and shellfish per person in 2006, a two percent increase over the 2005 consumption figure of 16.2 pounds, according to a study released by NOAA Fisheries Service. The increase brings seafood consumption up to slightly under the 2004 record of 16.6 pounds.

Americans consumed a total of 4.9 billion pounds of seafood in 2006. The nation imports roughly 83 percent of its seafood and remains the third largest global consumer of fish and shellfish, behind Japan and China.

“The National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2007 would provide American consumers with greater choice and confidence in the sustainability and safety of their seafood selections,” said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service. “This legislation is an important step toward increasing our supply of home-grown seafood.”

The United Nations is projecting a 40 million ton global seafood shortage by 2030, unless something is done. While NOAA works to end overfishing and rebuild wild stocks, the United States still needs aquaculture to narrow the trade gap and to keep up with consumer demand.

Of the total 16.5 pounds consumed per person, Americans consumed a record 12.3 pounds of fresh and frozen finfish and shellfish, up 0.7 pounds from last year. Canned seafood consumption dropped 0.4 pounds to 3.9 pounds per capita. We consumed a record 5.2 pounds of fillets and steaks, up 0.2 pounds. Shrimp continues to be the top consumed seafood in the United States at a record 4.4 pounds of shrimp consumed in 2006, up 0.3 pounds from 2005.

Increased seafood consumption is due in part to the growth in imports of farmed fish and shellfish. The United States can become more self-sufficient at producing seafood with expanded aquaculture, the topic of legislation currently pending in Congress.

NOAA Fisheries’ calculation of per capita consumption is based on a “disappearance” model. The total U.S. supply is calculated as the sum of imports and landings minus exports, converted to edible weight. This total is divided by the total U.S. population to estimate per capita consumption.

NOAA Fisheries has been calculating the nation’s seafood consumption rates since 1910 to keep consumers and the industry informed about trends in seafood consumption and trade. This information is published every year in the NOAA Fisheries Service annual report, “Fisheries of the United States.”

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: www.noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Service Statistics: www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/index.html

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption Seafood and Shellfish

Pounds of Edible Meat:

Year	Fresh and frozen	Canned	Cured	Total
2002	11.0	4.3	0.3	15.6
2003	11.4	4.6	0.3	16.3
2004	11.8	4.5	0.3	16.6
2005	11.6	4.3	0.3	16.2
2006	12.3	3.9	0.3	16.5

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption of Canned Fishery Products, pounds

Year	Salmon	Sardines	Tuna	Shellfish	Other	Total
2002	0.5	0.1	3.1	0.3	0.3	4.3
2003	0.4	0.1	3.4	0.4	0.3	4.6
2004	0.3	0.1	3.3	0.4	0.4	4.5
2005	0.4	0.1	3.1	0.4	0.3	4.3
2006	0.2	0.2	2.9	0.4	0.2	3.9

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption of Certain Fishery Items, pounds

Year	Filletts and Steaks	Sticks and Portions	Shrimp
2002	4.1	0.8	3.7
2003	4.3	0.7	4.0
2004	4.6	0.7	4.2
2005	5.0	0.9	4.1
2006	5.2	0.9	4.4