



Contact: Monica Allen
301-713-2370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 17, 2008

Seafood Consumption Declines Slightly in 2007

The average American ate 16.3 pounds of fish and shellfish in 2007, a one percent decline from the 2006 consumption figures of 16.5 pounds, according to a NOAA's Fisheries Service study.

Americans consumed a total of 4.908 billion pounds of seafood in 2007, slightly less than the 4.944 billion pounds in 2006. The U.S. continues to be ranked the third largest consumer of fish and shellfish, behind China and Japan.

Shrimp remained the top choice for seafood in the United States at 4.1 pounds per person, a slight decline of 0.3 pounds from 2006. Of the total of 16.3 pounds consumed per person, Americans ate 12.1 pounds of fresh and frozen finfish and shellfish, down 0.2 pounds from 2006. Canned seafood, primarily canned tuna, remained at 3.9 pounds per person. Americans consumed five pounds of fillets and steaks, down 0.2 pounds from 2006. These include Alaskan pollock, salmon, flounders, and cods. The remaining 0.3 pounds is cured seafood such as smoked salmon and dried cod.

The nation imports about 84 percent of its seafood, a steadily increasing proportion. Imports accounted for only 63 percent of U.S. seafood just a decade ago.

"While NOAA works to end overfishing and rebuild wild fish stocks, the U.S. also needs more sustainable domestic aquaculture to help meet consumer demand for healthy seafood and narrow the foreign trade gap," said Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "The National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2007, pending before Congress, would provide a clear permitting process for businesses and individuals to develop safe, sustainable aquaculture in U.S. federal waters."

At least half of the seafood imported to the U.S. is farmed. Aquaculture production in the rest of the world has expanded dramatically in the last 30 years and now supplies half of the world seafood demand, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

America's aquaculture industry, though vibrant and diverse, currently meets only 5 to 7 percent of U.S. demand for seafood. Most of that is catfish. Marine products such as U.S. farmed oysters, clams, mussels and salmon supplies 1.5 percent of American seafood demand.

"Expanding U.S. aquaculture would provide consumers with more affordable, locally and regionally produced, safe and healthy seafood," said Balsiger. "The development of domestic aquaculture will complement our wild fisheries and help revitalize waterfront economies."

NOAA's Fisheries Service 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. The information is published every year in NOAA's Fisheries Service annual report, *Fisheries of the United States*, which will be released Friday. The report will be posted on the web at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/index.html>

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 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

- 30 -

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption of Fish and Shellfish
Pounds of Edible Meat

Year	Fresh and frozen	Canned	Cured	Total
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
2007	12.1	3.9	0.3	16.3

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption of Canned Fishery Products
Pounds of Edible Meat

Year	Salmon	Sardines	Tuna	Shellfish	Other	Total
2003	0.4	0.1	3.4	0.4	0.3	4.6
2004	0.3	0.1	3.1	0.4	0.3	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
2007	0.3	0.2	2.7	0.4	0.3	3.9

U.S. Annual Per Capita Consumption of Certain Fishery Items
Pounds of Edible Meat

Year	Fillets and Steaks	Sticks and Portions	Shrimp
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
2007	5.0	0.9	4.1