

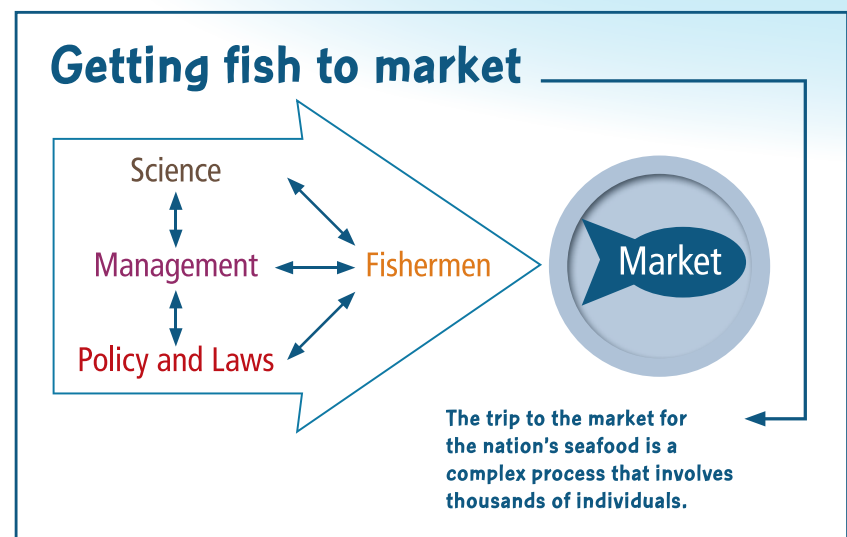
SUSTAINABLE U.S. SEAFOOD: WHAT'S SCIENCE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Join NOAA Fisheries Service in this five-part series to learn about the science behind responsibly managed U.S. fisheries.

What's the big deal about U.S. seafood?

Seafood is good for your health. The U.S. is the third largest consumer of seafood in the world. Americans consume 15 pounds of seafood per person per year, which is good news because seafood is a healthy source of protein, vitamins and minerals. That's why the USDA recommends eating it twice a week.

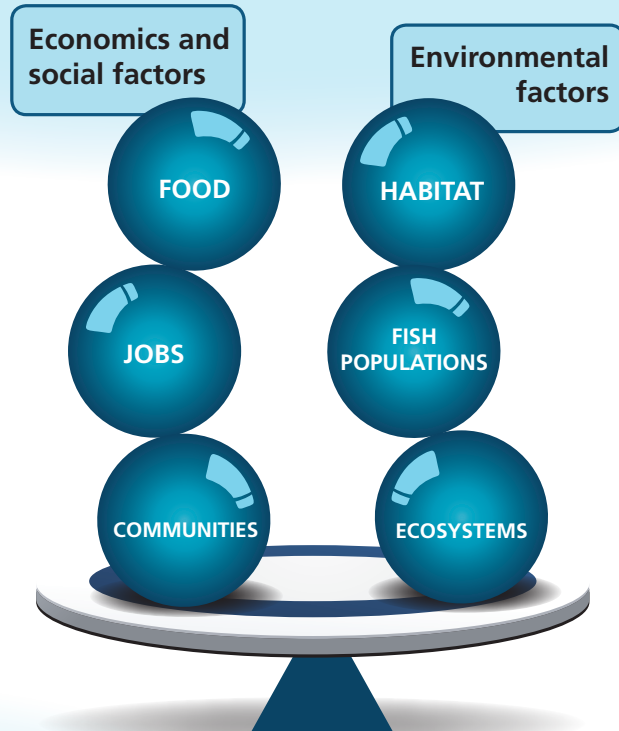
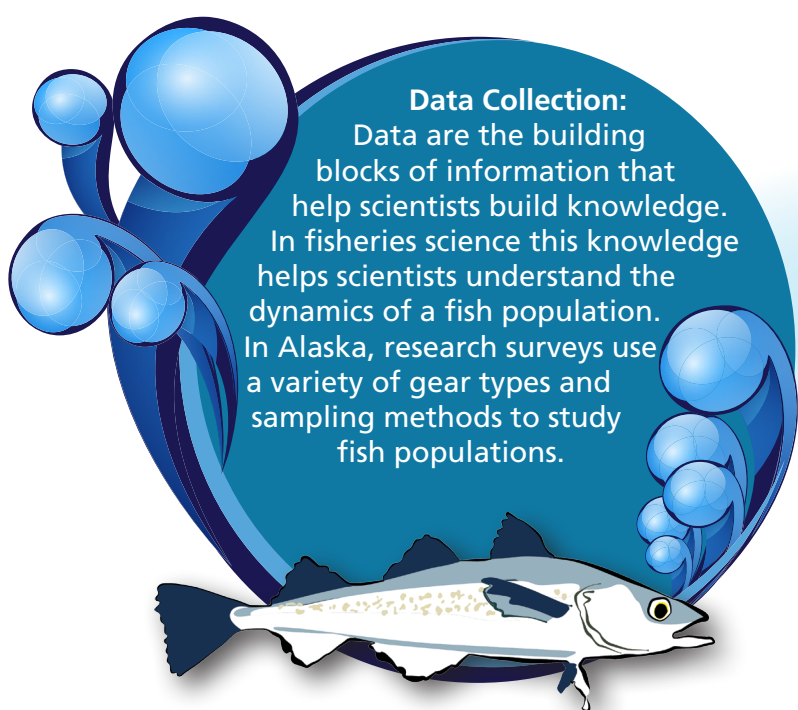
It's healthy for the economy. Commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries contribute significantly to the local and national economy. In 2011 seafood harvested by U.S. fishermen at ports in the 50 states were valued at \$5.3 billion. The U.S. is the largest importer of seafood in the world, valued at over \$16.6 billion, and the fifth largest exporter of seafood in the world, valued at over \$5.4 billion. The seafood industry provides employment opportunities for many people. Do you know anyone who has a job because of seafood?



Sustainable seafood: It's all about balance

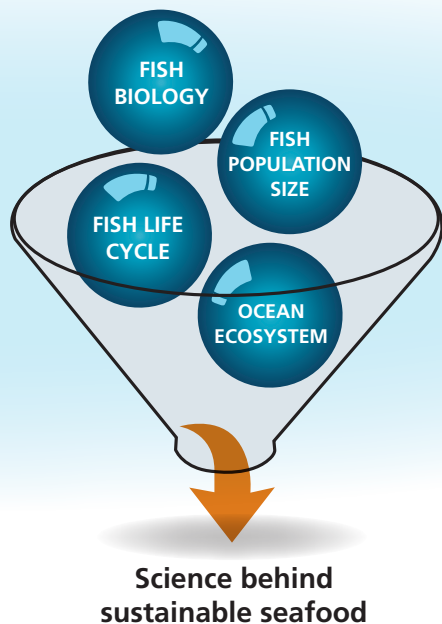
Conserving our natural resources, whether on land or at sea, is something we are all concerned about. For this reason, laws were created that ensure these resources are available for future generations. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) is the principle law governing U.S. marine fisheries. The MSA mandates that NOAA Fisheries limit the amount of fish harvested to prevent or end overfishing, in U.S. federal waters from 3-200 miles off our coasts.

Limiting the amount of fish harvested may sound easy, but it is a challenging balancing act. Factors like the need for jobs and food are considered, as well as ensuring healthy fish populations and ecosystems. Fortunately, there is a process that brings in a team of people such as scientists, fishermen, resource managers, tribes and citizens to work together in what are called Fishery Management Councils. At Council meetings, scientists give their recommendation for a harvest limit and then others can discuss whether that number should be lowered based on economic, social or environmental factors. If any one of these things is out of balance, then a fishery could be considered unsustainable.



What does science have to do with seafood?

The goal of fishery science is to determine the amount of fish to harvest that does little to no harm to the environment and leaves enough fish in the water for the population to renew itself. This is no easy task. It will take many different types of scientists to conduct the research to have the scientific knowledge necessary to responsibly manage a fishery. A mathematician will work on estimating fish population size; a biologist will find out things like how old a fish gets, or how many eggs survive to adulthood during a fish's life cycle; and a group of scientists including oceanographers, mathematicians and biologists work together to determine what influences an ecosystem. Follow this 5 part series this week to learn more about the science behind sustainable U.S. seafood.



Seafood is part of a healthy diet. Learn more at seafoodhealthfacts.org

Good Science + Responsible Management = Sustainable Fisheries = Sustainable Seafood!

In the U.S., NOAA Fisheries works toward harvesting seafood at levels that ensure healthy population growth, protects habitat and minimizes catch of species that were not meant to be harvested.

Learn more about sustainable U.S. seafood at FishWatch.gov



Find more information about the science behind sustainable seafood at afsc.noaa.gov or nmfs.noaa.gov. Email afsc.outreach@noaa.gov for more information. To register for NIE, email nie@seattletimes.com.