

Red-Listed Seafood (2025)

Removing Red-Listed Seafood in Acadia University's Wheelock Dining Hall

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Degradation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dietetic Educator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrialized, Capitalist Systems |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foodservice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Menu Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of Infrastructure |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of Professional Culture Support |

At a Glance:

- **Acadia University worked with their Food Service Provider to prioritize healthy and sustainable food on campus.** In 2018, they released the Acadia Food Plan, which includes measurable targets to achieve these priorities. This includes a target to serve sustainable seafood (e.g., Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified) and to not serve any seafood that has been “Red-Listed” (unsustainable) by Ocean Wise.
- **Madalyn Higgins, RD, the Dietitian and Sustainability Manager at Acadia Dining Services** (provided by Chartwell's Canada) worked with the students in NUTR 4913 Sustainable Food Systems and Dietary Patterns to address this target, providing them with a meaningful experiential learning opportunity. The students were all studying to become nutrition or health professionals, at least half of them intended on a career in dietetics.
- **The efforts of the students focused on three areas:**
 - 1 - Understanding and communicating key messages about sustainable seafood. Students put together a comprehensive review of existing research surrounding the topic and created communications tools to be displayed in the dining hall to inform staff and students about the negative effects of Red-Listed seafood and what steps they can take to minimize these effects.
 - 2 - Identifying Red-Listed seafood on the menu. Students investigated seafood sources to determine if they are on the Red List. This meant speaking with food system actors such as distributors and fisheries and comparing information to Ocean Wise resources.
 - 3 - Exploring strategies for more sustainable menu alternatives. Students proposed potential replacements using comparable items and looked for distributors.
- **The students presented their work** to the dining hall's Chef, Dietitian and Sustainability Manager, Director of Operations and Marketing Manager.
- **These efforts aimed to promote environmentally responsible dining** practices at Acadia University while raising awareness about the importance of sustainable seafood sourcing.



Background:

Buying seafood that is Red-Listed has been recognized worldwide as a significant problem, as it is linked to major concerns for our fisheries and the health of the planet such as low fish stock numbers, destabilization of the ecosystem-wide food chain, and Irresponsible fishing practices that contribute to the destruction of our oceans.

With the growing population and growing appetite for fish and seafood in developed nations, billions of people around the world rely on fish and seafood as an essential source of protein and a means of income. Researchers have gathered that this seafood should not be made commercially available and alternative options need to be considered.



Organizations such as [Seafood Watch](#), categorize red-listed seafood through different ranking systems tailored for various types of fishing such as fisheries and aquaculture, and score them based on their sustainability criteria. The sum of the scores allow the seafood to fall into Green (good choice), Yellow (good alternative), or Red (avoid) categories.

Other organizations, such as [Ocean-Wise](#) and [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#), also assess sustainability based on Seafood Watch's sustainability scoring system and convert the scores from three-fold to a binary system of Green and Red.

Lessons Learnt:

- Through research, students gathered that **the problem is that there is a lot of complexity and lack of transparency** surrounding the global seafood supply chain and what seafood is sustainable to eat.
- There is a **need to improve transparency** regarding sustainable seafood and ability to access this information. The group learned about the importance of understanding these tools to identify relevant information about sustainable seafood options.
- It is everyone's responsibility to ensure sustainable seafood consumption. Policies should be put in place to **regulate how seafood is being labelled sustainable**.
- While not easy, it is possible to identify unsustainable seafood sources and **replace them with more sustainable sources**.
- Sustainably sourced seafood, such as **recirculating aquaculture** is not perfect but can create seafood options. These options can be much more expensive, and we rely on food and nutrition professionals to get creative in the kitchen to use them more sparingly.
- The seafood that the students helped remove included the red-listed atlantic salmon and white shrimp that was being served in the Acadia dining hall. Students gathered sustainable options to be presented as recommendations to replace these red-listed menu items. **The better choices included the Ocean Wise-approved farmed Whiteleg shrimp and the Ocean Wise-approved farmed Giant Tiger shrimp.**

Other Relevant Examples

- [Recirculating aquaculture is Ocean Wise](#)-approved by fisheries worldwide and is often used for Atlantic salmon farming.
- Through the [Aquaculture Stewardship Council](#), you can search ASC-certified seafood using a simple drop-down search.
- Organizations such as the [Marine Conservation Society](#) create resources to help educate students about ocean sustainability.
- **Nourish Canada has developed a [Sustainable Menu Guide](#)** that can guide menus for organizations such as University campuses. The menu guide simplifies efforts to create sustainable menus that reduce environmental impact while offering healthy, affordable, acceptable, and fair food to clients. While not specific to sustainable seafood, it is more broadly helpful with practical examples.
- Also see other websites, research, and tools in the [Resource Cluster: Blue Foods](#)

Food for Thought

- *How do we ensure that we have aquatic resources for the future, especially with the growing demand?*
- *What kind of tools are effective or needed to empower and educate consumers to make sustainable choices?*
- *What supports do food service providers need to serve sustainable seafood choices?*

Contact Information

- Madalyn Higgins, Madalyn.Higgins@compass-canada.com



The ICDA SFS Toolkit is made to be used & shared freely.

Please cite the authors of the resources you use, and the ICDA SFS Toolkit if you are able:

<https://InternationalDietetics.org/sustainability/>