



The Salmon-Wise Consumer's *~ Buyer's Guide ~*

Informed consumers making wise choices means business and industry will do the same. Know your salmon.

PACIFIC SALMON: Chinook (king), coho (silver), sockeye (red), pink (humpy) and chum (keta, dog). Born in freshwater of Pacific coastal region, migrates to sea to grow and mature, returns to natal stream to spawn and die.

ATLANTIC SALMON: Vast majority of salmon farmed in Pacific waters are non-native Atlantics, causing major problems for wild Pacific salmon, steelhead and ecosystems. Wild stocks native to Atlantic coast severely diminished, not fished commercially. See Farmed salmon.

STEELHEAD: Ocean-going rainbow trout that returns to freshwater to spawn. Highly prized by recreational anglers. Wild steelhead almost never marketed for food; steelhead in stores almost certainly farmed. Wild populations suffering from salmon farm impacts.

WILD SALMON: Spawned, hatched and living naturally in the wild (not in a hatchery or salmon farm). Lives on insects, plankton, krill, small fish. Migrates to sea, returns to freshwater to spawn and die. Wild salmon, steelhead and their habitat are the core of TU's Pacific salmon programs.

HATCHERY SALMON: Born in captivity, raised there on artificial diet and released as juveniles to be caught as adults. Some hatchery practices have negative impacts on wild fish. Hatchery practices more protective of wild fish are a priority for TU.

FARMED SALMON: Spends entire life in captivity; fed artificial diet and treated with chemicals. Grayish meat often dyed pink; known to contain unsafe levels of toxins; reduced health benefits. Linked to significant depletion of wild salmon and steelhead. Alaska has no salmon farms; British Columbia and Washington do, as well as Chile, Norway, Scotland, other countries.

WILD-CAUGHT: Salmon caught in open waters, salt or fresh. Some mixed stocks of wild and hatchery fish possible.

LINE-CAUGHT, TROLL-CAUGHT SALMON: salmon caught and handled individually by a fishing boat trolling with lines and hooks.

FRESH: Typical wild Pacific salmon season runs from spring through fall, with some limited fishing in winter. Be aware, though, that "fresh" is often used to disguise farmed salmon. If it's "fresh" Atlantic salmon from British Columbia or Chile, for example, or anywhere in the Pacific, beware. It can only be farmed.

FROZEN AT SEA: Wild salmon caught, processed, and frozen while still at sea (typically within an hour of being caught), meaning that its freshness and quality are preserved. An option for getting wild-caught salmon off-season.

"ORGANIC" SALMON: By definition, does not currently exist in the US, since there are no standards nor is there a USDA certification process for "organic" salmon. However, watch out for imports, which might be from countries with weaker environmental/health standards.

"NATURAL" SALMON: A way to market farmed salmon that has been raised with fewer chemicals, additives, and antibiotics. While "natural" salmon might have fewer chemicals/antibiotics than typical farmed salmon, it is still often raised in open net pens, emitting waste, disease, and escapees, putting local wild fish at risk.