

***Enhancing the Market Value of
North Carolina Shellfish***

UNCW Center for Marine Science
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Barry Nash, North Carolina Sea Grant



North Carolina Wild-Caught Seafood Brands



OUTER BANKS
CATCH

Brunswick
Catch



Fresh from local fishermen to you.



CarteretCatch[™]
Select NC Seafood from the Fishermen of Carteret County

Ocracoke



FRESH

Caught Today The Traditional Way

National Statistics

From “Food Technology,” a publication of the Institute of Food Technologists

- Local means “grown/harvested in my state.”¹
- Consumers believe local food is fresher, has less chemical contamination and is of higher quality.²
- When it comes to food quality, more than half of consumers say they buy local whenever possible.³
- Consumers are looking for authentic products prepared in a “special place,” such as Copper River Salmon.⁴

Consumer Research

- 95 % would buy **branded** local seafood if it were available in other North Carolina markets. *2007 survey by Rita O'Sullivan, UNC-Chapel Hill*
- 90 % of consumers were willing to pay a premium price to ensure the seafood they buy is local. *2008 survey by Amy Anderson, UNC-Chapel Hill*
- 84 % prefer local seafood for its freshness and quality, its perceived safety and to **support local fishermen**. *2010 survey by Susan Andreatta, UNC-Greensboro*

2008 Survey by Amy Anderson, UNC-Chapel Hill

- 79 % purchase local seafood because marine stocks are managed for continuity by state and federal regulators.
- 87 % purchase local seafood because harvesters and processors comply with federal and state rules that ensure product safety.
- **94 % purchase local seafood because doing so supports local fishing communities.**

Branding Seafood

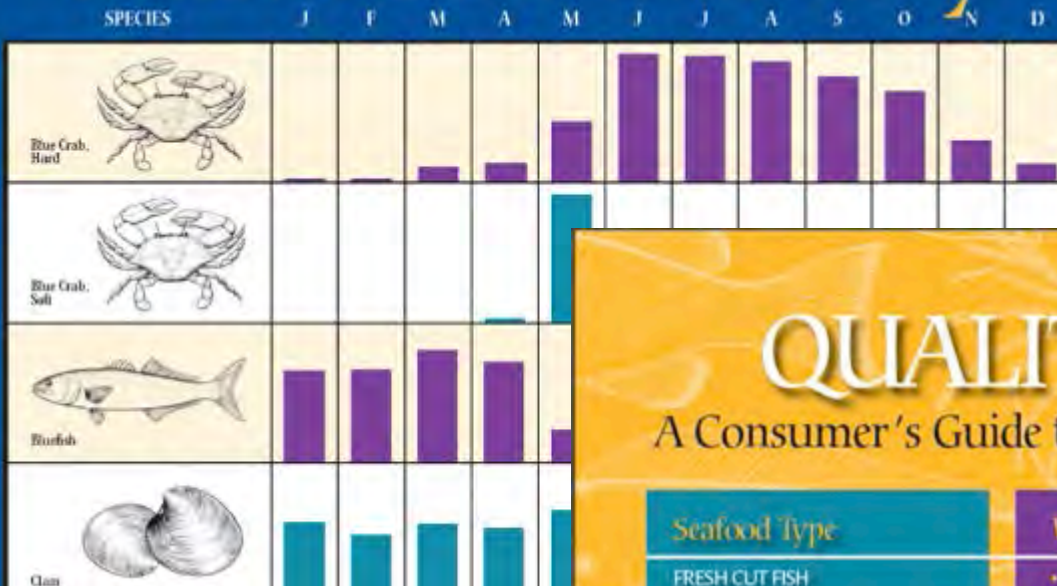
Commercial Objectives:

- Create a stronger awareness of – and demand for – local seafood.
- Improve revenues for fishermen, dealers and restaurants.

Educational Messages:

- Commercial species are seasonally available.
- Local seafood is inspected for wholesomeness.
- Marine resources are managed for continuity by state and federal regulations.
- The lifestyle and heritage of fishermen should be valued.

North Carolina Seafood Availability



Consumer Education Products

QUALITY COUNTS:


A Consumer's Guide to Selecting North Carolina Seafood

Seafood Type	What to Look For	What to Avoid
FRESH CUT FISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firm, elastic flesh Translucent color Moist appearance Mild scent Unexpired sell-by date, if present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mushy or bruised flesh Milky color Dry or brown edges Strong sour or "fishy" odor Expired sell-by date, if present
WHOLE AND DRESSED FISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright, shiny eyes Bright red gills, if present Firm, elastic flesh Scales adhering tightly to skin Smooth, glistening skin Mild scent Bright red blood line in gut cavity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cloudy, sunken eyes Pale or gray gills Mushy flesh Scales dull or missing Excess slime on skin Strong sour or "fishy" odor Dark or brown blood line in gut cavity
FROZEN FISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solidly frozen flesh When thawed, passes same criteria as unfrozen fish Tight, moisture-proof packaging Product is visible, unmarred Unexpired sell-by date, if present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially thawed fish Discolored flesh Dry or papery edges Torn packaging or crushed edges Signs of ice crystals or freezer burn Expired sell-by date, if present
LIVE SHELL FISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tightly closed shells; if open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaping shells; do not shut

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Mariner's Menu

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SEAFOOD SIGHTINGS

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With a chill in the air, you can warm up by trying one the recipes for chowder or gumbo. Enjoy!

- Perfect for the fall, Jeffrey Weeks with the *Charlotte Seafood Examiner* shares a few chowder and gumbo recipes: <http://www.examiner.com/seafood-in-charlotte/fall-carolina-seafood-chowder-and-gumbo-recipes>
- In this video, WRAL's Brian Shrader and Lisa Prince make frogmore stew: <http://www.wral.com/lifestyles/food/video/10205205/#/vid10205205>
- The *Charlotte Observer* features a recipe for jerk tilapia: <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/11/02/20111102jerk-seawinning-spices-up-fish.html>

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November 2011

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What is Marketing?

- Identifying and satisfying customer needs profitably.
- Understanding the customer so well the product sells itself. **Note: Selling is a secondary consideration.**
- Getting, keeping and growing customers by creating, communicating and delivering superior value to your target market(s).
- Value perceptions increase with quality and service.

Brand & Message Development

- Who are your primary customers?
- What value will you bring to those customers?
- What differentiates you from your competition?
- What do you offer that your competitors do not?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What is your greatest asset(s) and challenge(s)?
- What is your vision of the future? Five years from now? Ten years?

Enhancing the Value of North Carolina Shellfish

- ***The Market Question:*** *What qualities might increase the economic value of cultured North Carolina shellfish over shellfish farmed in other states?*
- ***The Education Piece:*** *What qualities might enhance the public's understanding of and appreciation for shellfish farming?*

Value Points

- The value of *locale* is water quality.
- Stress the importance of clean, unpolluted water to product *safety* and *eating quality*.
- Use of concrete *flavor descriptors*: *meaty or creamy texture; sweet or buttery taste; mildly salty*.
- Explain *sustainable*: *No more oysters are taken from the water than are put into it* or *farming reduces harvest pressures on wild populations*.

Value Points

- Stress *Environmental health*: **Oysters convert algae into dietary protein, which keeps coastal ecosystems healthy.**
- **Production practices** keep oysters free of sand and grit and yield single oysters of uniform size, shape and deep cups for the half-shell market.
- Proper refrigeration throughout the supply chain allows for **year-round consumption** of oysters.

Value Points

- ***Nutrition and health:*** *A serving of 12 oysters contains 22 grams of protein and 4 grams of fat; low in cholesterol and high in Vitamin A.*
- ***Recipes:*** How to shuck and prepare shellfish for home consumption.
- **Producer biographies are the most important attribute distinguishing North Carolina shellfish from the competition.**

Cooperatives Including Local Processors and Retailers

- Branding local products ~ niche marketing.
- Freezers and coolers ~ already equipped.
- Labor or machinery for value-added processing ~ shucked, smoked, pickled.
- Transportation via refrigerated trucks.
- Partner with wineries, microbreweries and ecotourism businesses to expand employment within and between communities.

Suggested Next Steps

- Develop an umbrella brand for the cultured shellfish industry.
- Create an outreach program targeting seafood consumers and chefs.
- Learn which value points boost the market value of cultured shellfish.
- Investigate successful producer cooperatives operating in North Carolina, e.g. Eastern Carolina Organics, Durham.

Footnotes

1. Sloan, Elizabeth. "Top 10 Food Trends." Food Technology. April 2007. 61 (4):35.
2. Sloan, Elizabeth. "Top 10 Functional Food Trends." Food Technology. April 2008. 62(4):37.
3. Sloan, Elizabeth. "Dissecting Demographics." Food Technology. August 2008. 62(8):60.
4. Sloan, Elizabeth. "Top 10 Food Trends." Food Technology. April 2007. 61(4):35.