

# Consumer Demand for North Carolina Seafood: Fact Sheet

In March 2020, researchers from North Carolina Sea Grant and Appalachian State University surveyed 1,600 North Carolina residents to learn about their **seafood eating habits**, the **potential demand for N.C. seafood**, and people's **willingness to pay for N.C. seafood**.

[View the full report.](#)

## Reasons for Eating Seafood

Survey participants could choose more than one reason:

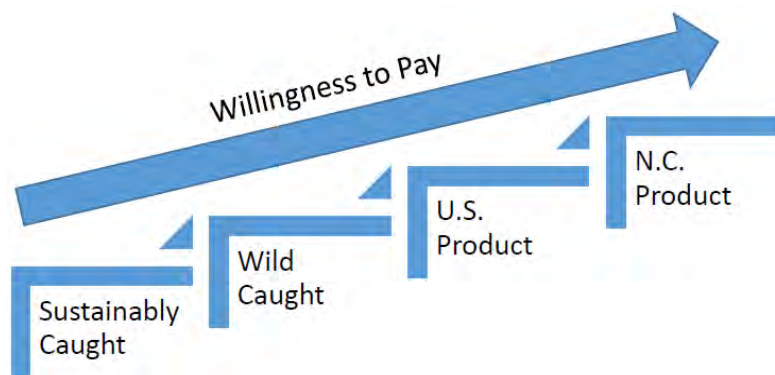
- Seafood has a flavorful taste (75% of participants chose this answer);
- Seafood contains heart-healthy omega-3 fats (nearly 47% chose this answer);
- Seafood is a good source of important vitamins and minerals (40% chose this answer);
- Seafood has a lower caloric content compared to beef, poultry or pork (nearly 33% chose this answer).

## Consumer Perceptions of US Seafood

Percentages reflect the number of participants who agreed or strongly agreed with these statements:

- Processors follow rules that protect the safety of seafood (90%);
- Fishermen follow rules that conserve fishery resources (84%);
- Purchase dollars should support the livelihoods of fishermen (79%);
- North Carolina seafood is preferred over imports (75%).

### Willingness to Pay Based on Product Attributes



## Willingness to Pay

Survey participants were presented with buying scenarios involving flounder and shrimp to estimate their willingness to pay when price was linked with the following attributes:

1) product of the U.S.; 2) imported product; 3) product of North Carolina; 4) wild-caught; and 5) sustainably caught. For more information on the pricing scenarios, [visit this report](#).

Below are key findings:

- While price was a prime factor influencing purchasing decisions, survey respondents were willing to pay higher prices for flounder and shrimp from North Carolina and other domestic sources;
- Consumers *may* be willing to pay more for shrimp with wild-caught and sustainable seafood labels;
- Consumers *may* be willing to pay more for flounder with a wild-caught but *not* a sustainable seafood label;
- Seafood labeled as caught in North Carolina or the U.S. may command premium prices over seafood labeled only as wild-caught or sustainably harvested.

## Purchasing Habits

- Slightly more than 40% of respondents typically purchase seafood in grocery stores;
- 31% purchase seafood at restaurants;
- Nearly 18% purchase from businesses that retail only seafood;
- 7% buy their seafood at farmers markets.

## Home versus Restaurants

Respondents reported eating seafood at home slightly more frequently than in restaurants from January to March 2020.

- 12% of respondents prepared a seafood meal *at home* once a week;
- 7% ate seafood *at a restaurant* once a week;
- Nearly 18% prepared a seafood meal *at home* more than once a month but less than once a week;
- About 15% consumed a seafood meal *at a restaurant* more than once a month but less than once a week.

## Closing Thoughts

These results support the four requirements for creating a successful approach to marketing and selling North Carolina seafood:

- A **product** must satisfy consumers' expectations for taste and nutrition;
- **Price** should reflect customers' perceptions of value;
- There must be an easily accessible **place** that sells seafood to customers who want it;
- A **promotion** strategy should exist to tell customers why a product is worth buying.

For more information on marketing seafood, [visit this North Carolina Sea Grant resource](#).