

Seafood consumers have new tool to protect resource.

There's a new mobile phone service available to people who want to eat only fish caught in an environmentally sustainable way.

Whether in a restaurant, at the fishmonger or in the sushi bar, consumers in 17 countries can now quickly look up the latest consumption recommendations for over 4,000 sea foods, simply by visiting www.seafoodguide.mobi on an internet-enabled mobile phone.

The International Seafood Guide for mobile phones, developed by researchers in the European Union project INCOFISH, compiles all available seafood advisories and allows consumers to access them through an easy-to-use mobile phone interface. With just a few clicks, users can get advice on whether a certain seafood can be enjoyed without jeopardizing its future as a food source or harming the environment. Clicking on the ruler icon will alert users to the smallest acceptable size for the seafood (whole, headless, or fillet) to be respected in order to assure the fish was not caught before it could spawn.

For centuries people have used ocean resources as if they were endless. Small-scale traditional fishing has transformed into an industry with gigantic factory vessels replacing small fishing boats. Global fishing fleets have also been improving fish-finding and capture technology, ever-increasing their capacity to track down the last schools of fish in the far reaches of the ocean.

Atlantic Cod and other species which have helped build cultures in the past are now severely threatened, as are the livelihoods of fishers around the world. Marine researchers have been documenting the trend of over fishing for years. Their advice to moderate resource use has been falling on deaf ears, as governments continue setting catch quotas well above sustainable levels and condoning damaging fishing practices. With the International Seafood Guide for mobile phones, consumers can now easily circumvent this lack of political will for change by raising their voices and voting with their wallets.

“We would like the consumers to set the rule, to be able to use the ocean resources in a responsible manner,” said Dr Rainer Froese, project leader and fisheries biologist at the Leibniz Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany. “When the demand for over-fished or juvenile fishes sinks, it is not worthwhile to catch them anymore. Our hope is that this instrument can serve all and everyone that wants to be involved in an active protection of our oceans”.

INCOFISH is an international scientific collaboration and European project with the goal to improve coastal zone management, and with a special focus on fisheries. Future development includes releases of national guides also in countries that lack seafood guides at present, or that currently lack seafood guides.

The International Seafood Guide for mobile phones will be presented under the theme "Global Challenges, Local Solutions" at the exhibition of this year's Seafood Summit, in Barcelona, Spain, January 28 and 29 between 9am-7pm. The INCOFISH team will demonstrate this new information package and respond to questions. Venue is Hall Cataluna and Hall Mediterraneo on Floor -2, the main conference floor, Gran Hotel Princesa Sofía, Plaza Pio XII, 4, 08028 Barcelona, Spain. +34 93 508 10 00 phone, +34 93 508 10 01 fax.

For journalists who wish to enter the exhibition please contact Seafood Choices Alliance Media Contacts for a free registration.

United States

Stephanie Crane Faison

Phone: +1 908 626 0111

Email: stephanie@seafoodchoices.org

Europe

Sandrine Malet

Phone: +33 1 39 34 69 08

Email: sd@g-com.fr

For additional information on seafoodguide.mobi or INCOFISH project please contact: Amanda Stern-Pirlot, INCOFISH WP7 Coordinator; Sustainability indicators
Phone: +49 431 600 4580, after Feb 4, 2008: +44 20 7811 3327, Email: astern-pirlot@ifm-geomar.de

Charlotta Jarnmark, INCOFISH WP1 leader; Data, Tools and Outreach
Phone: +46-761602331, Email: cjarnmark@gmail.com,

Rainer Froese, INCOFISH Project coordinator
Email: rfroese@ifm-geomar.de

More information: www.incofish.org

Images: <http://www.incofish.org/Forum/Photographs.php>

Caption: Seafood advice by internet mobile phone.

Source: <http://www.seafoodguide.mobi/>

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