



## Surefish

The Seafood Quality Specialists

413 3rd Ave. W.  
Seattle, WA 98119

Phone: 206-284-2686

Fax: 206-284-2667

Email: surefish@surefish.com



### Sport Fishing Report

- Sean Crosby



Here they come, Silver Salmon, pound for pound Alaska's hardest fighting sport fish and the favorite prey of many fishermen. Silvers tend to hold in slack water for the first few days upon entering their natal streams making it as easy for them to see you as it is for you to see them. Approach the bank using stealth and be careful with your presentation, as they are easily spooked. Frequently, I'll approach my favorite "silver spot" in disguise, perhaps wearing a clown suit or one of those fake glasses and nose combinations, something they'd never suspect. Just kidding, but stealth is of utmost importance. In many of Alaska's drainages the Silver run coincides with ample runs of Pink Salmon. Generally the Pink's will hold nearer the surface and the Silvers on or very near the bottom, so whether your using lures or flies, do what you can to "get down".

#### Some favorite lures of Silver Salmon enthusiasts:

Pixies, Cripple Herring, Flying C, Aglia Long,. And Vibrax. Flies of choice: any bright colored Bunny leach, Wully bugger, and of course, the Egg sucking leach. Silvers will rise for flies but for greater success, weighted flies will work best.

#### A quick review of the Alaska State records we're all chasing:

- King Salmon – 97.4 lbs (Kenai River 1985)
  - Coho Salmon – 26 lbs (Icy Strait 1976)
  - Chum Salmon – 32 lbs (Caamano Point 1985)
  - Sockeye Salmon – 16 lbs (Kenai River 1974)
  - Rainbow Trout (Steelhead) – 42.3 lbs (Kenai River 1970)
  - Dolly Varden – 19.1 lbs (Noatak River 1991)
- And the grand daddy of them all:  
Halibut- 459 lbs (Dutch Harbor 1996)

Until next time, do your part in protecting the resource and good luck fishing.

### How'd this happen?

-Lisa Goche

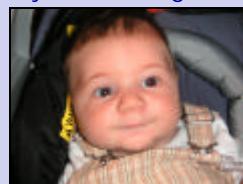
For a small company, it seems a tad strange that, purely by coincidence, we have ended up with many people with the same name. Hopefully this won't become confusing for anyone, but what are the odds? Take a look and see what I mean:

Steve – Alaska	Stephen – Massachusetts
Danny – Korea	Danny – Seattle lab
Bart – Main Office	Bart – Seattle lab
Lisa – Main Office	Lisa – Seattle lab

### The Surefish Family is Growing:



Sung-Ho Hwang  
July 23, 2004  
7.5 lbs.  
Busan, Korea



Baxter Cox  
August 6, 2004  
11 lbs. 9 oz.  
Seattle

Visit us at the West Coast  
Seafood Show Booth # 430



# Surefish Quality News

The Seafood Quality Specialists

Fall 2004 Issue

#### Surefish Training/Workshops:

- Surefish workshop on COOL, Recall, and the Bioterrorism Law
    - December 10, 2004
  - Surefish offers FDA Required HACCP Training
    - January 4 & 5, 2005
- Please contact us for more details at 206-284-2686 or at surefish@surefish.com

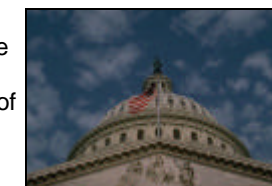
## COOL... or not cool?

-Allison Corcoran

Waiting until the last possible moment, the USDA finally issued the interim final rule for the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) Act on Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. For those out there that might still be unfamiliar with the COOL issue, this is a retail labeling program that applies to all retailers as defined under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act. If you're a retailer that is required to be licensed under this act (that is, if your invoice cost of all purchases of produce exceeds \$230,000/calendar year), then the COOL regulation applies to you. It also applies to all of your suppliers of covered commodities (fish & shellfish) whether direct or indirect. The new law requires you to notify your customers as to the country of origin and method of production (wild or farmed) for covered commodities and your suppliers to provide this information to you.

The fact that it is an 'Interim' final rule means that although it is a final rule, the USDA is providing further opportunity to comment for 90 days following publication. So there may possibly be further changes down the road. But the current final rule has changes from the proposed version that should relieve many im-

pacted companies. Most importantly, the USDA is delaying active enforcement of the law until April 4, 2005. Also the requirements of the rule do not apply to frozen fish or shellfish caught or harvested before December 6, 2004



Another big change is what products are included under the 'processed food item' exemption. The rule excludes all covered commodities if they are 'an ingredient in a processed food item'. Specific processes that result in such a change are described as: cooking, curing, smoking and restructuring. Canned salmon, canned tuna, smoked salmon and all breaded products are now specifically listed as examples of exempt products. Additionally, there are minor changes in the recordkeeping requirements and in the allowed use of 'May include product from....'

To read the interim final rule and additional information on it from the USDA, go to the USDA's website: [www.ams.usda.gov/cool/](http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool/).

Visit us at the West Coast Seafood Show Booth # 430

We have a complete Microbiological and Chemical testing laboratory

For more information contact [surelab@surefish.com](mailto:surelab@surefish.com)

## FINALLY...Bering Sea Pollock Fishery is MSC Certified

-Bart Cox

After a long awaited and lengthy review process, the Alaskan Pollock fishery has received final approval for Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification.



The At-Sea Processors Association applied for the eco-label in January 2001 as suggested by European seafood buyers. Eco-labels have become increasingly popular in Europe, and are gaining notoriety in the US. The concept is that consumers are more likely to buy products with eco-labels.

The Bering Sea pollock fishery will be the 10th fishery to receive the sustainable and well-managed certification approval. Alaska salmon was the first U.S. fishery to get council certification.

Several environmental groups opposed granting the certification for pollock. The main concern was the effect the fishery has on Steller's sea lions. Steller's sea lion populations off Alaska's

coast have dramatically dropped in the past 30 years. The conclusive reasons for the decline have not been determined.

After nearly a three-year evaluation of the fishery, the certifying group evaluated 72 performance measures in three areas: stock levels, environmental effects of the fishery and how effectively it is managed.

The certifying group determined that the fishery was responsibly managed. It found some minor deficiencies that need to be addressed, but none severe enough to refuse certification.

The entire certification process should be completed in the next few weeks. Surefish is an accredited MSC Chain of Custody certifier. Surefish can conduct an assessment of your company's chain of custody program and issue MSC Chain of Custody certification, thereby allowing you to use the MSC logo. For more information please contact Allison at [allison@surefish.com](mailto:allison@surefish.com)

## President's Piece

- Lisa Goché, President

### Surefish and Maritech

Most of you should have received an announcement from me regarding the acquisition of Surefish by Maritech. For those of you that may not have heard about this, I'd like to provide some highlights:

- The relationship is not new, as Maritech was a minority shareholder for several years.
- Our independent, private, objective, and confidential method of operation will not, in any way, change.
- Maritech provides technological/software solutions to the seafood industry and has been active mostly in Europe.
- Further geographical expansion and adaptation of technologies to our operations are but two of the many expected benefits.

Please contact me at any time with questions, comments or suggestions regarding this or any other matter at [lisa@surefish.com](mailto:lisa@surefish.com)

### "And may I introduce...."

Some of you may recall from our last issue I discussed a few of my plans for 2004 designed to expand services and increase flexibility in meeting client needs. Part of that involved a new position for Christine Keenan, and staffing up in Busan, Korea. Since then, a few more changes have been made I am pleased to share with you:

**Danny Hwang:** Danny, hired June 1, makes three at our Busan, Korea location. Danny's background and interest in seafood, strong computer skills, and English language capabilities make him an excellent addition to our wonderful team in Korea.

**Beverly Nelson:** Beverly was hired in the main office in June as administrative assistant. She is taking over Summer Quinn's office duties as well as several other functions. Beverly's computer, organizational, and accounting abilities provide an additional skill set that is important as we go forward and continue to grow. (Besides that she's just plain nice, which you will quickly discover when you have a chance to chat with her).

*Note: After over 5 years Summer left Surefish to pursue her first love – horticulture. We will miss her and wish her the best.*

**Lisa Esparza:** We have returned to the full complement of 3 in the Seattle lab with the hiring of Lisa Esparza in September. This will allow Christine to resume helping in consulting, off site inspections, projects, and the lab, as needed. Lisa has over 15 years experience in the seafood industry, primarily on vessels. Her strengths (besides an energetic and upbeat personality) include pollock roe, surimi, fillet, and H&G products.

Together, Bart, Danny, Lisa and Christine provide Surefish and our clients with an exceptionally well-rounded and experienced team. Their combined knowledge encompass both shore plants and vessels, and multiple species and product forms such as crab, salmon, pollock, surimi, cod, flatfish, tuna, shrimp, and much, much more.

I know you will be as impressed as I am with our new team members.

## Mercury in Fish

- Gertrud Gastel

FDA and EPA issues a joint Federal Advisory for Mercury in Fish.

What You Need to Know about Mercury in Fish and Shellfish; March 19, 2004 EPA and FDA Advice for:

- Women Who Might Become Pregnant
- Young Children
- Women Who are Pregnant
- Nursing Mothers

Fish and shellfish are an important part of a healthy diet. Fish and shellfish contain high-quality protein and other essential nutrients, are low in saturated fat, and contain omega-3 fatty acids. A well-balanced diet that includes a variety of fish and shellfish can contribute to heart health and children's proper growth and development. So, women and young children in particular should include fish or shellfish in their diets due to the many nutritional benefits.

However, nearly all fish and shellfish contain traces of mercury. For most people, the risk from mercury by eating fish and shellfish is not a health concern. Yet, some fish and shellfish contain higher levels of mercury that may harm an unborn baby or young child's developing nervous system. The risks from mercury depend on the amount of fish and shellfish eaten and the levels of mercury in the fish and shellfish. Therefore, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are advising women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children to avoid some types of fish and eat fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury.

By following these 3 recommendations for selecting and eating fish or shellfish, women and young children will receive the benefits and be confident that they have reduced their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury.

1. Do not eat Shark, Swordfish, King Mackerel, or Tilefish because they contain high levels of mercury.
2. Eat up to 12 ounces (2 average meals) a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock, and catfish. Another commonly eaten fish, albacore ("white") tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. So, when choosing your two meals of fish and shellfish, you may eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) of albacore tuna per week
3. Check local advisories about the safety of fish caught by family and friends in your local lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. If no advice is available, eat up to 6 ounces (one average meal) per week of fish you catch from local waters, but don't consume any other fish during that week.

The advisory urges parent to follow these same recommendations when feeding fish and shellfish to your young child, but recommends serving smaller portions.



## A Rigorous Look at Texture

- Christine Keenan



Texture is an important quality attribute and, along with other characteristics like flavor, appearance, good mouth feel, flake, and moisture is part of what keeps us coming back for more. The most obvious textural problems in seafood arise when product is not processed soon enough. This can result in softness, decomposition and other problems. Strides have been made to produce fresher and fresher fish products. With that come many questions regarding rigor mortis ("rigor") and its affects on fish quality. It is not always clear when is the right time to process. Having a bit of an understanding of what is going on with the flesh post mortem can make producing a tasty, fresher product with good yield and texture easier.

Upon death, muscle tissue will remain "flexible" until all reserves of energy (glycogen and ATP) are depleted. This is the pre-rigor stage. Once the ATP is depleted, rigor mortis, or the stiffening and shortening of the muscle tissues, occurs because there's no longer any energy to release the contractions. Eventually proteolytic enzymes allow the fish to pass out of rigor (post rigor).

Fish should never be processed while in rigor. Rubbery texture, poor yield, and tearing of muscle fibers (gaping) are some of the problems that can result. Pre-rigor processing can result in high drip shrinkage and dry grainy texture but can work fine if timed properly. Processing post-rigor is the safest course, but should

occur as soon as rigor is resolved in order to end up with the freshest fish possible.

There is no hard and fast rule on how long the rigor process lasts. It depends on temperature, fish size, species, and amount of lactic acid build up. The main controllable aspect is temperature: the lower the temperature the slower the rigor process. Speed is not a good thing here. Fish that go through rigor too fast can have severe gaping.

Worry comes when, wanting to produce the very freshest fish and gain an edge with longer shelf life, products are processed pre-rigor. The pre-rigor complications can be reduced by keeping the fish cool from the onset, and reducing stress from the harvest in order to extend the pre-rigor stage, thus preventing untimely stiffening of the product mid-processing. In addition, it should be noted that although the rigor process is inevitable, at some point it will resolve. It is important that product is frozen right away if processed pre-rigor and that it is kept frozen long enough for it to slowly pass through rigor in frozen storage. Complications arise as shipping has also improved, getting the frozen fish to the buyer faster, sometime before the process resolved itself. The best solution is to thaw at chilled temperatures in order for the fish to complete the rigor process slowly. By doing so you prevent rapid contraction of the muscle tissues upon thawing.

For more information regarding this and other quality issues contact Christine at [christine@surefish.com](mailto:christine@surefish.com).

### HOW WILL YOUR COMPANY DEAL WITH THE COOL REGULATION?

Surefish offers a workshop on how to comply with valuable seafood industry issues that will effect you: COOL regulation, Bioterrorism Law, and Recall. December 10; 8:00 am—12:00 pm. Contact us for more information: [surefish@surefish.com](mailto:surefish@surefish.com) or 206-284-2686

## Mystery Shopper: Seafood Kiosk or Seafood KAOS

- Mark Neely

Surefish's original "Mystery Shopper", Summer Quinn, has left us for new mysterious adventures and I have been duly appointed to take over the action packed role of secret agent: roving the local seafood departments...exposing the inadequacies of unsuspecting seafood sales people. Could I be the next James Bond? Or am I the next Maxwell Smart? Will I expose the seafood kiosk as a front for seafood KAOS?

I should be a natural at this because I do it all the time anyway. My wife stays 20 feet behind me and pretends she doesn't know me when we go by the seafood department. I harass these poor people and never buy anything.

I started at my favorite grocery store. For months they have been selling headless shell-on white shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*), labeled as Black Tigers for over \$10 per lb. I snuck my camera in to snap a shot. Damn! Everything properly labeled now. Then I saw some Chilean Sea Bass for \$12.99 per pound. My mouth began to water. I tried not to drool. "Excuse me, is that the market name for this fish?" "Yes Sir, but its also called Patagonia Toothfish". Someone must have tipped them off. They obviously knew I was coming.

Next stop was a place I never shop: Lots of long lines and toothless cashiers. Decent seafood display though. The seafood is presented inside a refrigerated glass or plastic case. Temperature says 37 degrees. Nice looking sockeye and a good variety of shrimp. Dungeness crab...King crab...some Snow crab. "Hmm...look at that snow crab", I thought to myself. I can see a large area on the shoulder with some blueing. "Can I get something for you Sir?" "Thanks, I'm just looking right now. Can you tell me what that dark blue spot is on that crab there, right on



top?" "I don't know...It's probably not good though." She picks it up and sniffs it. "It doesn't smell bad though, but when in doubt, I throw it out!" Thud! Into the garbage. I cringed. I wanted to tell her what it really was. I'm a seafood inspector and I love talking about seafood. I couldn't blow my cover though.

I went to another store, this time a large warehouse bulk type outlet. No counter person to talk to. "Oh well, lets see what they have", I said to myself. U-10 scallops for \$7.69/lb. U-15 Headless Black tigers for \$9.99/lb. The shrimp had some slight heat stress. The store also had some cooked whole Dungeness crab. Their carapaces were cracked and broken. Didn't look very appealing because you could see guts inside. Also on display were some packaged King crab legs for \$13.99/lb. Some of the packages had a broken knuckle piece or two included. The pack date said 6/08/04. Must have been a mis-print, but nobody was around to harass. They were also selling packaged salmon labeled as "Farmed Atlantic Salmon, color added". \$4.49 per pound. The pack date said "9/08/04, sell by 9/14/04", a six-day shelf life in the grocery store. Who knows how long the consumer keeps it before cooking? I hope the fish were processed promptly and handled properly after harvest.

No definite "Seafood KAOS" on this day, but I will be vigilant. They can swim, but they can't hide! In the mean time, if you see any "Seafood KAOS" out there, be sure to call me on my shoe phone.