

Undercover Seafood Shopper

- Summer Quinn

My adventures, since you have last heard, took me briefly to Montana. While I was there I thought it would be interesting to question random seafood vendors about the quality of their merchandise. I was surprised to find that some of the information I was told was not quite as far fetched as I was expecting. Though be it, tales they still were.

One of my favorite grocery stores in Missoula MT, I thought if any, would give me some information to be proud of. When I asked my question the person behind the counter started off well, and would have satisfied me if they stopped after their first sentence. I know I have said that before. The question, (one of my favorites) why does the flesh of that salmon fillet look all torn up like it is falling apart? The answer started out well when the salesman said to me, "It is because of how they handle it while filleting." The response would have been expectable, except the gaping was excessive and he could not stop there. "It has nothing to do with quality or age of the fish. It is still top of the line salmon." I thanked him for his answer and said I was just curious because I did not know anything about seafood. People in the line I held up to ask that

question looked at me like I was crazy, but I am learning to cope. Store hopping, as I do for these articles, is getting harder and harder because finding manned seafood counters is becoming a challenge. I went to at least four stores that only offered frozen seafood. One of these stores was a health food store and the only seafood they had was smoked salmon.

The last market I visited was here in Seattle, and the species of the moment was farmed tilapia. I did not need to ask anything. I was waiting my turn in line when a woman and her partner asked the clerk "What is tilapia?" He replied to them that, "It is a fancy fish from South America that tastes like butter." Yea, that is exactly how I would describe tilapia to someone who has never eaten or heard of it before. Perhaps they brought it home and had the seafood experience of their lives.



Mystery Shopper?

Surefish offers a wide range Microbiological and Chemical testing services

Alaska Symphony of Seafood

-Val Motley
Strategic Events & Fundraising



New Products Contest

Since 1994, the Alaska Symphony of Seafood has celebrated creative and innovative seafood products by bringing together many exciting food ideas before a distinguished panel of judges who represent various market segments related to the seafood industry. The

purpose of the event is to encourage the development of new products made of resources taken from the waters of Alaska. Innovation and new thinking are the desired outcomes.

The Alaska Symphony of Seafood performance begins with the private judging of qualified entrants in Chicago. All products are prepared and displayed by professional culinary staff. Judging criteria are based on packaging/presentation, overall eating experience, and potential for

commercial success. A first, second, and third place winner are selected from each category. Following the judging in Chicago, we have an Open House for all contest entrants, special seafood industry invitees, sponsors, the press and the judges. In addition to the Chicago events, we hold our Gala Soiree and Awards Ceremony in Anchorage.

In order to participate in the Alaska Symphony of Seafood, your product must be market ready – in commercial production by the date of the event. First place winners from each category are sent to the International Boston Seafood Show. From start to finish, the Alaska Symphony of Seafood offers a means to publicize new seafood products, promote healthy source of protein, and help expand the worldwide markets for wild Alaska seafood.

The Alaska Symphony of Seafood is sponsored by the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. For more information about the Alaska Symphony of Seafood, please visit our web site at www.symphonyofseafood.com.

Sport Fishing from Alaska's Kenai Peninsula - Sean Crosby

Summer's here and the Kings are in, Sockeyes are on their way and most sport fishermen are sleeping in their waders for the next three months.

The Kenai Peninsula provides excellent fishing opportunities for everyone from Kenai to Homer and all points in between. If you happen to be heading to Alaska, as so many of us in the industry are this time of year, and can make your way 100 miles south of Anchorage, here is a brief synopsis of what's here and how to catch it:

The Russian river, about 40 miles east of Kenai, will open June 15. Sockeye make their way up stream and converge on the confluence of the Kenai river and Russian rivers. Use a "coho" fly or any number of spinners, You WILL get at least one.

Closer to the City of Kenai, the Kenai river, which spawned the world record 97.4 pounder, is always good for King, Sockeye, Coho, and in even years (2004) Pinks. If you'd rather avoid the pink salmon than don't fish August, when they'll be thicker than Tom Selleck's chest hair. For Kings, I recommend a guided river boat, it increases your chances of success by volumes as landing a fish from the bank is very difficult. Sockeye and Coho can be taken from the bank with Vibrax spinners, "coho" flies or flesh flies, stick with bright colors as it is a silty river. By regulation the use of bait is prohibited.

For a slower paced more relaxing guided trip try the Kasilof river, about 20 miles south of Kenai. This drainage is open to bank fishing and drift boats only, no motors. Being an enhanced fishery the only fish that may be retained are those with a clipped adipose fin, the fleshy fin at the



base of the tail. This denotes a hatchery fish; native fish must be released. Fishermen find their greatest success with salmon eggs drifted downstream about 18" off the bottom. Fly fishermen will vouch for a weighted egg sucking leach or any number of egg patterns.

The next major river system is the Ninilchik River, another 20 miles down. Due to an extraordinary run of native fish supplemented with hatchery releases, this river should be outstanding. Add to your arsenal, Vibrax spinners or Pixies.

The final river and perhaps the most popular, at least with fly fishermen, is the Anchor River, about 60 miles south of Kenai. This river supports a healthy run of King and Coho but also boasts world class Steelhead and Dolly Varden fishing. Drifting salmon eggs alone or in conjunction with a Spin and Glo should give you good action. To fish by fly stop in to the Anchor Angler tackle shop and ask the proprietor, Stan, what's working. He'll probably say "chartruse egg sucking leaches". Any Steelhead must be released without removing it from the water.

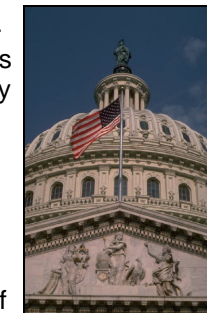
As always in the rivers, fish the tidal zones any time around high tide, fish upstream at daybreak and dusk. If you've made it through all of these river systems and still don't have a fish in the box than perhaps the Homer spit lagoon is more your speed. Every summer the city of Homer releases hundreds of thousands of smolt into the man-made lagoon on the spit. From Mid-May through September the Kings and Coho return from the open ocean to circle the lagoon until they are caught by folks with freezer space. This is easy fishing. Bring your lawn chair, a bobber and some 3 inch Herring. Some people just can't catch Salmon. If this is you than take a halibut charter out of Ninilchik, Anchor Point or Homer fun fishing with a very high success rate.

Remember, never let your work interfere with your fishing, and Tight lines to you.

Are you prepared for COOL?

- Allison Corcoran

The September 30th deadline is fast approaching, and most seafood companies have already started to look at what they need to do to become COOL compliant. All suppliers of seafood to retailers, whether direct or indirect, must comply with the regulation. Many of the major retailers have set an earlier deadline by which date their suppliers must have their COOL systems implemented. As of now, the USDA has not yet issued a final rule, but anticipates doing so sometime in July. Once they



have issued the final rule, it will be posted on the USDA's COOL website – www.ams.usda.gov/cool/. Currently fish and shell fish are the only commodities that must adhere to the September 30th deadline – the other covered commodities (beef, poultry and pork) received a two year reprieve under Public Law 108-199, signed by President Bush on January 27th. There is some hopeful news for the seafood industry – NFI reported on May 4th that the House Agriculture Committee was preparing to introduce legislation to repeal the mandatory COOL law and replace it with a more feasible voluntary system.

Specie Spotlight: Alaska Pollock

- Gertrud Gastel

Species Name: Alaska Pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*). Regional names include Walleye pollock, bigeye cod, snow cod, whiting, Pacific tomcod and Pacific pollock.

Geography: Central California coast to Bering Sea, south to Kamchatka (Sea of Othosk) and southern Sea of Japan.

Seasonality: Year round (frozen) and fresh during fall & winter (frozen is more common).

Appearance/Flavor: Pollock is a mild, delicate-tasting fish, with a slightly coarse texture. Some find it more flavorful than cod or haddock, perhaps because it has a higher oil content. Boneless Alaska Pollock fillets are creamy tan color. Cooked, the lean, moist meat is white and firm, with a nice flake. If you need a white fillet, deep-skinned (i.e., fat line removed) Pollock offers a "nice white portion".

Nutrition: (per 3.5 oz raw) Cal. 81, Fat cal. 7, Total fat 0.8g, Sat. fat 0.3g, Cholesterol 71mg, Sodium 99mg, Potassium 326 mg, Protein 17.2g, Iron 0.2mg, Omega-3 0.4g.

Buying/Handling/Storing: As with all fish in the round, gills should be red, eyes should be bright and clear, and the fish should have a fresh (not fishy or sour odor). Avoid gray or brownish flesh, softness, bruises or bloodspots. The FDA Hazard Guide indicates that parasites are potential hazard, but not if product is cooked prior to consumption. Pollock should be chilled immediately after landing. H&G and fillet blocks will keep for nine months at 0 F. Properly handled fresh pollock stored at 32 F will keep for 7-12 days. Commercially frozen and stored in home freezer, 8-9 months; purchased fresh and home-frozen, 4 months; thawed, never frozen or previously frozen and home refrigerated, 36 hours.

You should know..... Alaska Pollock shouldn't be confused with the two pollocks of the Atlantic, *Pollachius pollachius* and *Pollachius virens*, a.k.a. saithe. Atlantic Pollock meat is darker than that of Alaska Pollock. The Atlantic species ranges from pale red to tan. It is firm, has a large flake and turns off-white to white when cooked.

Cooking Methods: Baking, broiling, steaming, poaching or sauteeing. A favorite for fish and chips. While this versatile whitefish is commonly used in fried-fillets sandwiches, surimi, breaded/battered portions and nuggets, it can hold its own in gourmet preparation. Pollock's delicate taste is easily complemented with herbs and light sauces. In Japan, the roe is sometimes salted, colored with red vegetable dye and sold as Momijiko.



Feature Recipe:

Alaska Pollock with Black Bean Compote

- 4 (4 to 6-ounce) pollock fillets
 4 teaspoons olive oil, divided use
 1 onion, peeled and chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1 (15-ounce) black beans, rinsed and drained
 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes
 1 can (4-ounce) diced green chilies
 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 1. Season pollock fillets to taste with salt and pepper.
 2. In large, heavy or non-stick skillet, heat 3 teaspoons oil over medium-high heat. Cook pollock in oil about 2 minutes per side or until fish just flakes when tested with a fork. Remove from skillet; keep warm.
 3. In same skillet, add remaining olive oil and cook onion and garlic over medium heat until soft. Stir in cumin, cook 1 minute. Add beans, tomatoes and chiles. Cover and cook over low heat 10 minutes. Stir in lime juice and season to taste.
 4. Serve pollock over black bean compote with mini-corn muffins and fruit salad, if desired.



Dish makes 4 servings: enjoy!

-Gertrud Gastel

Update from Surefish - Busan, Korea

I am pleased to inform all of our readers that in the last 2 years Surefish in Busan, Korea has experienced significant growth in several areas. Our client base and inspection volume have steadily expanded. We have also been getting more and more requests to travel to Japan, China and Russia for HACCP audits and inspections. Throughout we continue to work hard at providing excellent service to our clients. And so, toward that end, I wish to announce that, effective June 1, 2004, we will be staffing up from 2 to 3 people in order to allow us to respond even faster to the many short-notice requests we receive. This will also permit greater flexibility in the ability to travel to meet our client needs. Staffing up will allow us to meet all of these demands even more efficiently.

Please contact me or our President, Lisa Goché, at any time to let us know what we can do for you in Asia. In the meantime on behalf of myself and Young Hee Kim we extend our warmest appreciation to our many loyal clients that have made this growth possible.

John Hwang and Lisa Goche'

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Surefish East Coast

- Stephen Thompson

It's been only two months since the East Coast office officially opened as Seafood Quality Systems, LLC just after the International Boston Seafood Show announcement. I am pleased to report the office is off to a roaring start.

We are deeply into Country of Origin Labeling program development for several clients. With all the purveyors of retail products specifically in the form of fresh or refreshed fish and scallops bound for supermarket chains, we have been very active in counseling suppliers of these commodities. We are building a complete Policies and Procedures Manual for one very large distributor and entertaining programs for several others.

Supplier and Food Safety auditing has also kept the East Coast traveling. In May there was the opportunity to visit two Louisiana crawfish plants with the investigation intended for the plants to process alligator meat. Yup, alligators are considered seafood. Although alligator processing is straight forward, farming alligators is not. There is a very short season for wild alligator - September - but farming goes on all year. The wild alligator season is as one would expect; they go out and hunt alligators. But, farming alligators is highly sophisticated. Helicopters are used with GPS (Global Positioning System) guns. The helicopter flies out over the bayous and locates the alligator's nest. They "shoot" the nest with the GPS gun which downloads the coordinates into the computer back at the farm. Then the farmer takes the airboat out into the bayou and reads the coordinates of all the nests and goes from one nest to the next collecting the alligator eggs. Scared of Mama alligator? She usually isn't around in the daytime so the farmer just picks the eggs out of the nest.

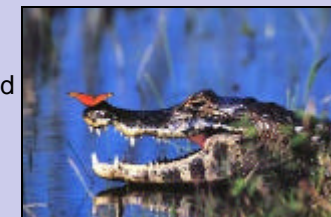
If Mom is actually encountered? "Ah, just give her a whack on the snout with a stick". Well, no thank you...

The alligators are raised to not much more than 5 lbs. which I found interesting. They are killed, skinned and headed and gutted at the farm then transported on ice to the plant. Here the carcasses are cut by hand into chunks of three types of meat; red, white and brown. The white meat is the tail meat and is the most desired. It's tender and tasty usually as a breaded nugget. Hey, just like chicken. Red and brown meat come from the body and the legs. Also typically in breaded nugget form, these are bit stronger and more "gamey" tasting.

Watch for alligator to gain in popularity in the US market.

Of course, we are doing a significant amount of sampling and inspection of assorted products.

All in all, we are glad to be busy and to be able to spread the Surefish brand throughout New England. Surefish East Coast and Seafood Quality Systems is here to offer all the services currently available through the other offices and laboratories. We are proud to be part of the brand and look forward to growing our client list. Please call Surefish East Coast and Seafood Quality Systems for all your seafood technical needs at eastcoast@surefish.com or 508-636-0728 or mobile phone 401-935-2088.



New State-of-the-Art Shrimp Plant in Mexico

- Bart Cox

Matatipac Corporation has nearly completed a shrimp processing facility in Tepic, Mexico. Carnitech USA and Frigoscandia Equipment AB formulated the layout and designed the equipment with help from Surefish with quality, sanitation, and HACCP guidance.



Matatipac has been in the shrimp business for years, cultivating White Shrimp (*Penaeus Vannamei*) since 1988 on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. In 1992, the corporation invested in an intensive shrimp farm with modern technology. Matatipac has a shrimp farming production rate of 6.8 metric tons per hectare each year. Over the years the shrimp has been sold to various shrimp plants throughout Mexico and the final product has been exported to Europe and the US.

With an ample supply of their shrimp readily available, Matatipac decided to start processing shrimp on their own. The focus of the Matatipac management is to produce and supply high quality product to their customers. The plant will have the capacity to process 2,200 pounds of White Shrimp per hour.

The facility will be fully operational in August 2004 with production lines for the following forms:

Shell-on IQF Shrimp, Shell-on Easy-to-peel IQF Shrimp, Peeled & Deveined IQF Shrimp, Head-on IQF Shrimp, and Cooked & Peeled IQF Shrimp

Surefish has been assisting Matatipac with the Quality and HACCP regulations. If you have any questions regarding the Matatipac plant in Mexico please contact Bart Cox at bart@surefish.com or Mr. Marco Antonio Rincón Valdés at marcoarincon@matatipac.net in Mexico.

Check us out on the web: www.surefish.com