



## Understanding SFP's Fishery Evaluation System

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) compiles and synthesizes publicly available information on fisheries worldwide and presents it in a standardized way on the [FishSource](http://FishSource) website. This information is further processed through a series of algorithms and the outcomes are displayed on SFP's buyer partners "Metrics Dashboard," including color ratings with explanations, and respective improvement recommendations.

SFP uses governance quality, health of target stock, and environmental impacts of fishing as the fishery evaluation components, and color ratings as a quick reference for the risk level associated with these components and, overall, for each fishery.

While the current version of the algorithms was developed to maximize an alignment with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard, SFP is continuously working to adapt and develop FishSource and Metrics, to expand coverage of data, to improve technical platforms, and to better adapt algorithms to the new MSC Fisheries Assessment Methodology ([FAM](http://FAM)). The attached table provides general explanations on what conditions trigger each color rating.

SFP does not publicize the details or outcomes of its fishery evaluation system, and SFP's evaluations are not intended to fulfill the role of eco-labels and rating systems. However, we provide a summary of our system in the table below and we will share full details by request.

SFP's guidance to retailers is provided strictly on a business-to-business basis, to allow retailers to evaluate their specific sources and encourage improvements where appropriate. SFP advises all partners that claims of sustainability should be based on a credible ISEAL Alliance-compliant eco-label. At this time, SFP recommends only the Marine Stewardship Council as a consumer-facing claim of sustainability for wild-capture fisheries; however, as more standards become available SFP will evaluate them and provide best advice to partners.

Through analysis of FishSource and partner fisheries sources, SFP identifies priority fishery improvement needs that would improve governance quality, rebuild stocks, and mitigate environmental impact. These proposed improvements are shared with key stakeholders of the fishery with the aim of building consensus on improvement actions. Fishery improvement needs are also made public through media releases and on the "Improvements" section of each FishSource fishery profile.

**FishSource** ([www.fishsource.org](http://www.fishsource.org)) is SFP's industry-facing website on fisheries sustainability information. FishSource's mission is to provide major seafood buyers with up-to-date, impartial, actionable information on the status of fisheries and improvements needed to become sustainable.

By assembling the essential data and making it freely available, FishSource lowers the key barrier to entry for companies to engage in sustainable sourcing. Companies thus save time and resources by accessing FishSource for sustainability information and fisheries status.

**ISEAL Alliance** [www.isealalliance.org/content/about-us](http://www.isealalliance.org/content/about-us)

**Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)** [www.msc.org/](http://www.msc.org/)

---

*The mission of the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership is to maintain healthy ocean and aquatic ecosystems, enhance fishing and fish-farming livelihoods and secure food supplies.*



Summary of SFP Fishery Evaluation System

Evaluation Outcome	Evaluation Components		
	Governance Quality	Target Stock	Environment
Low Risk (Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management strategy is precautionary*</li> <li>AND</li> <li>- Managers follow scientific advice</li> <li>AND</li> <li>- Fishers comply with regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fish population is at a high level</li> <li>AND</li> <li>- Fishing pressure is appropriate to allow the population to maintain or grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All impacts on habitat, protected species, other fisheries, and ecosystem functions are known, monitored, and managed to minimize negative impact</li> <li>AND</li> <li>- A representative network of marine protected areas are in place where the fishery operates**</li> </ul>
Medium Risk (Yellow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managers ignore scientific advice</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- Management is not precautionary*</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- Fishers compliance is inadequate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population is at a high level BUT fishing pressure is too high to maintain stocks, OR</li> <li>- Fishing pressure is appropriate to allow a high level population to maintain or grow BUT fish population is at a low level, OR</li> <li>- Population is at a high level BUT fishing pressure may be too high to maintain or grow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some but not all <i>green</i> conditions are met</li> <li>AND</li> <li>- No <i>red</i> conditions are met</li> </ul>
Unknown Risk (Orange)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough information is available to evaluate risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough information is available to evaluate risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough information is available to evaluate risk</li> </ul>
High Risk (Red)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Substantial illegal fishing is taking place, undermining the intent of management</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- Managers ignore scientific advice AND management is not precautionary*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population is at a very low level</li> <li>OR</li> <li>- Population is at a low level AND fishing pressure is too high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fishery is having a significant negative effect on: (a) protected species that are failing to rebuild; (b) other fisheries because bycatch mortality is preventing their recovery; (c) ecosystem functions; or (d) habitats that are under-represented in spatial marine protections where the fishery operates</li> </ul>

\*According to the precautionary principle, not having enough scientific information cannot be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures. The Precautionary Approach is described in the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UN, 1995 [http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/fish\\_stocks\\_agreement/CONF164\\_37.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/fish_stocks_agreement/CONF164_37.htm)).

\*\* Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) follows the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifications for protection. This includes under the term Marine Protected Area (MPA) various levels of protection, ranging from strict nature reserves where no or little fishing or other activities are permitted, through wilderness areas and national parks, to lower forms of protection such as habitat management areas and protected seascapes (i.e., where protections may be limited to restricting the use of a specific fishing gear).