



WWF

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A close-up photograph of a fresh seafood display in a supermarket. The display includes several whole fish, including salmon and sea bream, along with octopus tentacles and fresh green herbs like parsley. A white price tag is visible in the center of the display.

RISKS OF SOURCING SEAFOOD IN HONG KONG SUPERMARKETS

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's most respected conservation organizations, with a network active in more than 100 countries. WWF's mission is to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF-Hong Kong has been working since 1981. In support of our global mission, WWF-Hong Kong's vision is to transform Hong Kong into Asia's most sustainable city where nature is conserved, carbon pollution is reduced, and consumption is environmentally responsible.

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INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong supermarket chains lag behind the global industry norm in providing sustainable seafood and implementing a comprehensive sustainable seafood procurement policy. Hong Kong is the second-largest per capita consumer of seafood in Asia and eighth in the world, so our choices have a significant influence on fishery resources in the both the South China Sea and global oceans.

WWF-Hong Kong is the only environmental NGO in the city to assess seafood sustainability and engage with public and business to drive a sustainable seafood movement. We also monitor supermarkets in the city and encourage them to formulate and implement a sustainable seafood procurement policy.

WWF-Hong Kong released its first sustainable seafood procurement policy to Hong Kong's nine major supermarket groups in 2017¹, which followed a report looking at supermarket chains' association with seafood that is linked to serious environmental, social and legal risks² in 2016.

Our work in the sector has led to improvements in seafood labelling and the removal of some threatened species from shelves. In our current supermarket scorecard, WWF-Hong Kong evaluates the progress of Hong Kong's nine supermarket chains since up till the end of May 2018.

There are 29 chain supermarket brands in Hong Kong owned by a total of nine groups or companies (Table 1) comprising over 60 per cent market share in the city's food retail sector³

Table 1: Nine supermarket groups and their brand

Group name/ company	Supermarket brand
AEON Stores	AEON STYLE, AEON Supermarkets
A.S. Watson	PARKnSHOP Frozen Store, PARKnSHOP Supermarket, PARKnSHOP Superstore, International by PARKnSHOP, Taste, Fusion by PARKnSHOP, Gourmet, Great, SUPA-DE-PA, Food Le Parc
CEC International Holdings Ltd.	759 Store, 759 Store Frozen Market and 759 Store Supermarket
City Super	City Super
CR Vanguard	CR Vanguard, U select
Dah Chong Hong Holdings Limited	DCH Food Mart Deluxe and DCH Food Mart
Dairy Farm	Jasons Food & Living, Marketplace by Jasons, Oliver's the Delicatessen, ThreeSixty, Wellcome Supermarket, Wellcome Superstore
Moretide Investments Ltd.	Kai Bo Food Supermarket
YATA Limited	YATA Department Store, YATA supermarket

1. THE SIX KEY AREAS OF A SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY

	Key Area	Description
1	Avoid selling threatened species	Species listed as critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable on the IUCN Red List ⁴
2	Sustainable seafood target and promotion	Adopt a clear seafood target with a defined timeline using the WWF Seafood Guide or labels such as MSC and ASC
3	No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics)	Proactively monitor and testing of seafood products for potential chemical residues including antibiotics
4	Proper labels with detailed information	Provide scientific name, country of origin and production method on products packaging or signage
5	Eliminate alleged human rights abuse	Monitor supply chains for potential abuse, communicate with suppliers to improve the practice within a specific timeframe and at best use third-party auditors
6	Public announcements	Embrace a comprehensive policy with regular progress reports accessible by the public

2. SCORING

To update and evaluate the progress in commitments and actions that have been taken by the nine supermarket groups in Hong Kong since quarter 3 in 2017, WWF-Hong Kong used information provided directly from each group (mainly through email communication and over the phone) to analyse their performance.

Based on the performance indicators below, WWF-Hong Kong assigned scores from 0 to 10 in each criterion and placed an overall final average score of each supermarket group.

Table 2: Performance indicator to assign score to supermarket groups

Performance Indicator	Scoring Allocation
0	Nothing has been shared
1	No progress has been updated
2	Took fragile action
3	Some action taken, mainly because of government regulations
4	Followed government regulations and/or did extra monitoring or work (but no further details disclosed)
5	Asked suppliers to take the lead or the supermarket undertook half of the initiative
6	Undertook improvement and explored alternatives (but no timeline)
7	Took proactive action and worked with suppliers/vendors
8	Set up targets and a timeline, but did not publicly disclose
9	Set up targets, timeline and worked with suppliers/vendors
10	Fully fulfilled the requirements of the initiative

3. NINE SUPERMARKET GROUPS' PERFORMANCES AND COMMITMENT PROGRESS (ALL AREAS WILL BE SCORED FROM 0 TO 10)

AEON Stores (AEON STYLE, AEON Supermarkets)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 6)

Based on the findings of a threatened species survey conducted by WWF-Hong Kong and published in 2017¹, AEON sold golden threadfin bream, Japanese eel and bluefin tuna in its outlets. The company phased out golden threadfin bream and for processed golden threadfin bream products, such as imitation crab sticks, it is working with suppliers to explore alternative options. Japanese eel from Japan and bluefin tuna will only be sold during the Japan festival promotional campaign with no extra special promotion and a limit on the number of outlets selling the items.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 9)

In 2017, AEON introduced a range of MSC and ASC certified products, namely MSC scallops, clams and Arctic surf clams and ASC salmon. In 2018, AEON introduced additional sustainable seafood products, including cod loin and own brand TOPVALU seafood products. Currently, its

outlets stock 33 long-term sustainable seafood products up from 18 a year ago. Since last year, AEON has set up and increased its sustainable seafood targets and expanded its suppliers for sustainable seafood.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 5)

AEON has requested its suppliers to provide health certifications and criteria for procurement. The company requests suppliers to undertake tests on risky products and will do its own voluntary chemical tests on suspicious seafood items, e.g. products which have been recalled by other supermarket chains in response to CFS (Centre for Food Safety) alerts. However, the company does not have clear guidelines or a system to monitor chemicals used in seafood.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 8)

All of AEON seafood products are properly labelled with country of origin. To enhance its transparency, AEON has encouraged its suppliers to add the scientific name and production method (wild caught or farmed) on the packaging. This year, AEON aims to add that information on the packing or price tag with a target of the scientific name on 30 per cent and the production method on 20 per cent of frozen fish products.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 5)

Following WWF-Hong Kong's report on seafood supply chain risks in October 2016², AEON began discussing the issue with a supplier allegedly connected to

human rights abuse. The company will keep monitoring its seafood suppliers for the labour rights violations. If the company identifies suppliers potentially associated with human rights issues, it will proactively discuss the issue with them.

Public announcements (score:7)

AEON has followed MSC, ASC and WWF-Hong Kong guidelines to source sustainable seafood. This year, it will introduce its own brand TOPVALU sustainable seafood to increase sustainable seafood choices in its outlets. AEON held a sustainable seafood promotion on 21-27 June. It will arrange similar sustainable seafood promotions at least once a year to increase public interest. Sustainable seafood is a focal point of its Environmental, Social and Governance Report.

City Super



Avoid selling threatened Species (score: 7)

Based on the results of threatened species survey previously conducted by WWF-Hong Kong¹, Japanese eel, Japanese spiky sea cucumber and golden threadfin bream were identified in City Super's outlets. City Super stopped selling wild caught Japanese spiky sea cucumber and golden threadfin bream (including imitation crab sticks). The company got in touch with a Japanese eel breeding supplier in 2017 to

discuss sustainable options. Currently, the supplier does not produce enough volume for export. City Super is considering the sustainability of this farmed eel and will continue to search for alternatives.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 6)

City Super will continue to introduce additional MSC and ASC certified products, and possibly other eco-labels each year. It has introduced two MSC certified seafood products in its dairy and frozen department and four MSC certified ones in its fish department as long-term products.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 6)

City Super goes beyond the legal requirement to monitor chemicals in seafood and has considered testing seafood items which are listed on the Risk Assessment in Food Safety published by the CFS. In 2018, City Super began selectively monitoring antibiotics in farmed seafood. The selected antibiotics are mainly chosen from overseas food safety alerts, research studies and journals.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 7)

Price cards for seafood at City Super include country of origin information and from May 2018, the company will progressively add the scientific names of seafood, initially focusing on about 20 salmon products. It has also started to list production method (wild caught or farmed) and will conduct an annual review of the information. But the timeline and scope for labelling the production method has not been fully disclosed.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 6)

City Super is cautious when sourcing seafood products from Southeast Asia⁵ that are potentially associated with human right issues and has stopped carrying products from companies which face alleged human right violations.

Public announcements (score: 4)

City Super carries several MSC, ASC and other eco-label certified seafood products in its outlets, but has not made a public announcement regarding how it will implement a comprehensive sustainable seafood procurement policy. The company stated it will review its seafood procurement policy year by year and stay up-to-date with seafood information shared by WWF-Hong Kong and other organizations to align its purchasing policy.

CEC International Holdings Ltd. (759 Store, 759 Store Frozen Market and 759 Store Supermarket)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 6)

Golden threadfin bream and Japanese eel were found in 759 outlets by WWF-Hong Kong¹. 759 has replaced its processed golden threadfin bream products with a sustainable alternative. For Japanese eel products, the company is checking details with its supplier. At this stage,

management has stopped its promotion and minimized the quantity of Japanese eel products in the outlets.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 6)

Notably, 759 was not observed to sell MSC and/or ASC certified sustainable seafood products¹. But the company is reported to be willing to educate its suppliers and staff on sustainable seafood in Hong Kong. At the same time, the company is exploring the opportunity to introduce sustainable pangasius products with its supplier.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 5)

Every batch of 759 seafood products requires a health certificate from the country of origin and the company requires suppliers to provide a testing report which guarantees the product has passed the chemical regulations from its country of origin. Depending on the risk of particular products, the company will select random samples for testing in third-party laboratories. Generally, it will do microbiological and *E. coli* tests on frozen seafood labelled “sashimi”. Seafood associated with recent food safety issues is also tested.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 9)

The company has improved its labelling on all frozen seafood products with scientific name, country of origin and production method.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 6)

The company will remind the suppliers from those risky countries (e.g. in Southeast Asia) to be aware of labour rights issues and will stop purchasing any

products associated with human right issues.

Public announcements (score: 3)

A comprehensive sustainable seafood procurement policy has not yet been established by 759, but it has shared sustainable seafood information and WWF-Hong Kong's seafood guide internally among staff. The company will explore the opportunity to introduce sustainable seafood products in its outlets.

Dairy Farm (Jasons Food & Living, Marketplace by Jasons, Oliver's the Delicatessen, ThreeSixty, Wellcome Supermarket, Wellcome Superstore)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 5)

According to a threatened species survey carried out by WWF-Hong Kong¹, Dairy Farm sold bluefin tuna, golden threadfin bream, squaretail coral grouper and Japanese eel in its outlets. The company says that sales of squaretail coral grouper and bluefin tuna have been halted in its seafood section, but consignee counters still sell bluefin tuna. The number has been greatly reduced since 2017, but the exact percentage has not been shared. Dairy Farm has agreed to halt promotion on bluefin tuna and golden threadfin

bream in all shops, however, it has not made a commitment regarding the sale of Japanese eel, golden threadfin bream and related products in its outlets.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 6)

According to Dairy Farm's reply, it introduced a range of MSC and ASC certified seafood products since 2013, with sustainable salmon steak and salmon fillet sold in select stores to test market acceptance in 2017. In May 2018, Dairy Farm launched sustainable seafood programme across all its supermarket brands. The company has taken steps to gradually introduce more sustainable seafood, but does not have a timeline for additional products.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 4)

Dairy Farm regularly tests for the most commonly-found contaminants such as malachite green, heavy metal and nitrofurans (antibiotic), however, the frequency of the tests is not disclosed.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 4)

Dairy Farm is working with suppliers to explore the feasibility of adding scientific name and production method on labelling.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 7)

Dairy Farm requests its suppliers to provide supporting documents to prove that products meet the standards and requirements of local regulations and do not involve any labour exploitation, slavery or human trafficking. Further, Dairy Farm is strengthening its code of conduct to ensure all suppliers comply with local and international regulations.

Public announcements (score: 6)

In May 2018, Dairy Farm set-up a sustainable seafood programme⁶ requiring MSC, ASC or BAP certificates at Wellcome outlets and plans to gradually increase the variety of sustainable seafood it stocks. This plan has not been publicly announced.

YATA Limited (YATA Department Store, YATA supermarket)



Avoid selling threatened Species (score: 5)

YATA has stopped selling golden threadfin bream and the quantity of Japanese eel has been decreased in its dry food and fresh food sections, following a previous WWF-Hong Kong report¹ that identified the products in its supermarkets.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 9)

YATA currently sells 27 sustainable seafood items, include MSC-certified shrimp and mussels, and ASC -certified pangasius fillets and tiger prawn meat. Over 10 per cent of its active seafood counter products are currently sustainable. The company hopes to increase both this percentage and the number of products this year. In April 2018, YATA launched sustainable seafood promotions across

four of its outlets and is planning another promotion in November. It has run an annual campaign to promote sustainable seafood since 2015 to promote MSC and ASC certified seafood products.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 4)

YATA follows the government regulations and works with testing and certification bodies to do extra monitoring work, but has not disclosed exact details.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 4)

To comply with Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W), the country of origin is placed on all YATA seafood products. At this stage, YATA has no plan to add scientific name and production method.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 5)

YATA has started to collect information about factory facilities and operation procedures from its seafood vendors and discussed human rights abuse issues with its suppliers.

Public announcements (score: 5)

YATA does not have a comprehensive sustainable seafood procurement policy and has not publicly committed to source or increase its seafood from certified sustainable sources, even though it sells a range of MSC and ASC certified sustainable seafood products. YATA does, however, actively promote sustainable seafood. Its Tseung Kwan O outlet has set a long-term promotional section on a fridge to promote sustainable seafood.

Dah Chong Hong Holdings Limited (DCH) - (DCH Food Mart Deluxe and DCH Food Mart)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 9)

DCH has stated that the golden threadfin bream and Japanese eel found in its outlets during a WWF-Hong Kong survey¹ are no longer sold.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 1)

DCH has not provided any information about its upcoming plans and target for sustainable seafood.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 3)

DCH's suppliers are required to provide health certificates for its Quality Assurance department and depending upon risk level and country of origin, DCH may require different types of test reports from suppliers, covering heavy metal, veterinary drug residues and pesticides. DCH has ISO 22000 certification, a global recognition of its food safety management system. Based on the requirements of ISO 22000:2005, DCH needs to demonstrate its ability to control food safety hazards. The company will conduct bi-monthly heavy metal tests

on seafood samples, however, it did not provide details of how it will monitor or test other chemicals.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 3)

Last year, DCH updated its information on labelling of its own brand pangasius fish fillets, but has no plans to enhance its transparency on labelling.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 6)

The company stated that if it identifies any of its seafood products associated with slavery issues, it will immediately stop sales.

Public announcements (score: 1)

DCH has not provided an announcement on its sustainable seafood procurement policy.

A.S. Watson (PARKnSHOP Frozen Store, PARKnSHOP Supermarket, PARKnSHOP Superstore, International by PARKnSHOP, Taste, Fusion by PARKnSHOP, Gourmet, Great, SU-PA-DE-PA, Food Le Parc)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 2)

A.S. Watson supports and follows all the requirement of CITES⁶ under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (the Ordinance), Cap. 586. The company is committed not to sell any endangered species listed on CITES Appendices and any shark's fin products, however, a survey² conducted by WWF-Hong Kong showed that A.S. Watson sold golden threadfin bream and Japanese eel in its outlets.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 2)

A.S. Watson offers a range of certified sustainable seafood in selected stores, taking into account affordability to customer demographics of specific stores. The company has not made a quantitative time-bound commitment to source more sustainable seafood or promote sustainable seafood to its customers.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 0)

A.S. Watson has not provided its food safety policy or details on internal chemical tests.

Specific and detailed measures have not been shared.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 1)

A.S. Watson has not shared details of its efforts and improvements on labelling by adding scientific name, country origin and production method.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 5)

The company is a member of the Business Social Compliance Initiative⁷ (BSCI) and it is committed to ensuring its suppliers do not engage in slavery. It is in the process of implementing BSCI's requirements on this issue. It has conducted a briefing session for buyers on the importance of this issue and partnered with the Mekong Club⁸, a non-profit organization that works with the private sector to eradicate slavery.

Public announcements (score: 1)

Though A.S. Watson does sell a range of MSC and ASC certified sustainable seafood products in its outlets, the company has not provided details on its sustainable seafood procurement policy and information cannot be found in any publicly accessible platform.

Moretide Investments Ltd. (Kai Bo)



Avoid selling threatened species (score: 0)

Kai Bo has not responded to any of our attempts to contact its senior management and details of a sustainable seafood procurement policy are not known.

Sustainable seafood targets and promotion (score: 0)

Kai Bo has not shared the details with WWF-Hong Kong.

No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics) (score: 0)

The company has not provided details.

Proper labels with detailed information (score: 0)

Kai Bo has not provided details.

Eliminate alleged human rights abuse (score: 0)

The company has not provided details.

Public announcements (score: 0)

The company has not shared the details with WWF-Hong Kong.

4. NINE SUPERMARKET GROUPS' SCORECARD ON

SIX KEY AREAS IN SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY

Hong Kong's nine major supermarket groups have been assessed on their progress up to end of May 2018 regarding transparent sustainable seafood policies and commitments. Performances were scored from 0 to 10 and evaluated using the performance indicator (table 2). Each supermarket group received an overall score (weighed average of the six key areas in sustainable seafood procurement policy). Quantitatively, the scores can be represented as follows:

0-3.67 bad (red)

3.68- 7.33 medium (yellow)

7.34-10 good (green)

Table 3: Overall scores of nine supermarket companies

	Avoid selling threatened species	Sustainable seafood target and promotion	No harmful chemicals (including antibiotics)	Proper labels with detailed information	Eliminate alleged human rights abuse	Public announcements	Overall
AEON	6	9	5	8	5	9	6.67
City Super	7	6	6	7	6	4	6.00
759	6	6	5	9	6	3	5.83
Dairy Farm	5	6	4	4	7	6	5.33
YATA	5	9	4	4	5	5	5.33
DCH	9	1	3	3	6	1	3.83
A.S. Watson	2	2	0	1	5	2	1.67
CR Vanguard	0	0	2	5	0	0	1.17
Kai Bo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Current status of each supermarket group

Since 2016, WWF-Hong Kong has actively engaged in dialogue with Hong Kong's supermarket chains, urging them to develop a comprehensive action plan to put in place sustainable seafood procurement policies. The follow-up action included investigations and scorecards.

The current status of action undertaken by the supermarkets:

- Five supermarket groups (AEON, City Super, 759, Dairy Farm and YATA) have set up criteria to introduce more sustainable seafood, formulated targets on sustainable seafood, implemented plans to improve the seafood labelling, put in place plan or phased out highlighted threatened species
- Compared with the overall scores in last year, three (DCH, A.S. Watson and CR Vanguard) supermarket groups' performances are falling behind, having taken minimal actions to improve their sustainable seafood procurement policies
- One supermarket group (Kai Bo) did not reply on the scorecard
- Overall, three supermarket groups failed in the seafood procurement policy scorecard

Each supermarket group is encouraged to meet with WWF-Hong Kong for a detailed review of its results and WWF-Hong Kong's recommendations to improve its seafood procurement policy.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there is much room for improvement in supermarket groups' seafood procurement policies, our work in this sector has led to some improvements on seafood labelling, the removal of threatened species from shelves and the sale of sustainable alternatives. This is the first step and we are now working closely with some supermarkets to undertake risk and sustainability assessments on their seafood supply chains, allowing for practical, effective plans to be jointly devised.

Hong Kong supermarkets must take actions to implement holistic sustainable seafood procurement policies to minimize environmental, legal and social risks, conserve our vulnerable marine ecosystems and rebuild depleted seafood stocks. WWF-Hong Kong recommends that ALL supermarkets:

Set up a comprehensive sustainable seafood procurement policy

The policy involves not selling threatened species, the increasing procurement of sustainable seafood, regular chemical testing, sufficient and accurate product information and the elimination of alleged human rights issues in supply chains.

Hong Kong supermarkets should publicly announce their sustainable seafood policies to make their commitments transparent and eliminate any ambiguity in the policies. A public announcement will also demonstrate how a responsible supermarket can take the initiative and contribute to the conservation of natural resources for future generations.

With these actions from supermarkets, sustainable seafood will become more accessible to consumers across Hong Kong.

END NOTES

1. https://d3q9070b7kewus.cloudfront.net/downloads/Briefing_paper_layout_1709015_with_covers_sc_jc.pdf
2. https://d3q9070b7kewus.cloudfront.net/downloads/seafood_supply_chain_risk_in_hong_kong_supermarkets_4.pdf
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7. <http://www.amfori.org/content/amfori-bsci>
8. <http://themekongclub.org/>

RISKS OF SOURCING SEAFOOD IN HONG KONG SUPERMARKETS

90%

90% of assessed commercial fish stocks are already fully fished or overfished

2

Hong Kong is now the second largest per capita consumer of seafood in Asia



170+

Hong Kong consumes seafood coming from more than 170 countries and territories around the globe

>90%

Over 90% of respondents were willing to avoid an unsustainable seafood item if they know its status



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