

# LOCAL SEAFOOD IN THE RETAIL MARKETPLACE: HOW DOES **MASSACHUSETTS** STACK UP?



*Based on data from Eating with the Ecosystem's "Eat Like a Fish" citizen science project*

In recent years, New England states have stepped up their commitment to local food systems. In Massachusetts, this support is embodied in the passion of organizations like the Massachusetts Seafood Marketing Program, New Bedford Seafood, and Gloucester Fresh Seafood programs.

One goal shared by all is to increase sales and accessibility of local seafood within the region. However, to date, little data has been available to monitor progress towards this goal. Eating with the Ecosystem's "Eat Like a Fish" citizen science project helps fill this void, by providing first-of-its-kind data on the availability and diversity of local wild seafood in New England's retail marketplace.

The Eat Like a Fish citizen science project set out to understand how well New England's retail marketplace reflects the diversity of wild seafood in nearby ocean ecosystems. The project's premise was simple: no one is better suited to investigate the seafood marketplace than seafood lovers themselves. Over six months, 86 citizen scientists in the five New England coastal states made weekly visits to neighborhood supermarkets, seafood markets, farmers markets, and fishing piers, where they hunted for 52 local wild seafood species. This fact sheet summarizes what participants learned about seafood from their searches in Massachusetts.

## MASSACHUSETTS PARTICIPATION STATS:



**23**  
CITIZEN  
SCIENTISTS



**803**  
MARKET  
VISITS

**143**  
DIFFERENT  
MARKETS  
SAMPLED



## AVAILABILITY AND DIVERSITY OF LOCAL SEAFOOD IN MASSACHUSETTS:

Through their seafood searches, citizen scientists produced over 3,200 data points on the presence and absence of local seafood within the Massachusetts retail marketplace. Two indices were calculated based on this data: an index of local seafood availability and an index of local seafood diversity. The figures at right show how Massachusetts compares to other New England coastal states in its performance on these metrics.

Details on the calculation of these two indices can be found in the full report, "Eat Like a Fish: Diversifying New England's Retail Marketplace."



Massachusetts ranked third among New England states in availability of local seafood. This ranking puts Massachusetts ahead of Connecticut and New Hampshire, but behind Maine and Rhode Island in terms of local seafood availability.



Massachusetts ranked fourth among New England states in diversity of local seafood. This ranking puts Massachusetts ahead of New Hampshire, but behind Connecticut, Maine, and Rhode Island in terms of local seafood diversity.

## AVAILABILITY OF 52 LOCAL SEAFOOD SPECIES IN RHODE ISLAND:

The tables below present findings on the availability of 52 local wild seafood species in Massachusetts and shows how this availability compares to coastal New England at large. The middle column (MA %) of each table indicates the probability of finding each species when shopping in a Massachusetts retail market. The righthand column (NE +/-) indicates how the probability of finding each species in Massachusetts differs from the probability of finding it in the New England marketplace overall (including markets in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine). Species with positive values in the righthand column tend to be easier to find in Massachusetts than in the region as a whole, whereas those with negative values tend to be harder to find.

| SPECIES         | MA % | NE +/- |
|-----------------|------|--------|
| Acadian Redfish | 1%   | -7%    |
| American Plaice | 5%   | -1%    |
| Black Sea Bass  | 3%   | -8%    |
| Blue Crab       | 4%   | +1%    |
| Bluefish        | 39%  | +12%   |
| Bonito          | 0%   | 0%     |
| Butterfish      | 2%   | -1%    |
| Cod             | 62%  | +5%    |
| Croaker         | 2%   | +1%    |
| Cunner          | 0%   | 0%     |
| Grey Sole       | 10%  | 0%     |
| Haddock         | 63%  | +11%   |
| Halibut         | 44%  | +7%    |
| Herring         | 5%   | -3%    |
| John Dory       | 2%   | 0%     |
| Jonah Crab      | 20%  | +2%    |
| Lobster         | 76%  | -4%    |

| SPECIES        | MA % | NE +/- |
|----------------|------|--------|
| Mackerel       | 15%  | +3%    |
| Mahi Mahi      | 3%   | +1%    |
| Monkfish       | 17%  | -9%    |
| Mussels        | 44%  | +14%   |
| Ocean quahog   | 5%   | -3%    |
| Peekytoe Crab  | 2%   | -8%    |
| Periwinkle     | 2%   | 0%     |
| Pollock        | 15%  | 0%     |
| Quahog         | 30%  | +6%    |
| Razor Clam     | 0%   | -3%    |
| Red Hake       | 7%   | +4%    |
| Sculpin        | 0%   | 0%     |
| Scup           | 9%   | 0%     |
| Sea Robin      | 0%   | -1%    |
| Sea Scallop    | 83%  | +14%   |
| Sea Urchin     | 0%   | -1%    |
| Skate          | 7%   | +1%    |
| Smooth Dogfish | 2%   | +1%    |

| SPECIES             | MA % | NE +/- |
|---------------------|------|--------|
| Soft Shell Clams    | 69%  | +5%    |
| Spiny Dogfish       | 2%   | +1%    |
| Spot                | 0%   | -1%    |
| Squid               | 35%  | -9%    |
| Striped Bass        | 26%  | +12%   |
| Summer Flounder     | 12%  | -2%    |
| Surf Clam           | 5%   | -1%    |
| Swordfish           | 48%  | 0%     |
| Tautog              | 0%   | -2%    |
| Tilefish            | 1%   | -1%    |
| Tuna                | 43%  | +6%    |
| Weakfish            | 0%   | 0%     |
| Whelks              | 5%   | -1%    |
| White Hake          | 4%   | -5%    |
| Whiting             | 0%   | -4%    |
| Winter Flounder     | 6%   | 0%     |
| Yellowtail Flounder | 21%  | +5%    |

## A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR PARTICIPANTS:



"There is nothing more authentic in New England than eating native fish." The engaging fishmonger at Red's Best said this to me while diving deep into the importance and value of seeking out local, wild fish. He was spot on. Every experience during this project has been so meaningful. I really value their genuine passion for what they do and how willing they are to share their experience (and tasty recipes too!) at the counter. I was able to purchase a lovely piece of hake for this week's assignment. It was fresh off fisherman Bob Eldridge's boat named Unicorn out of Chatham and the price was right. At \$11/pound, I have found my new favorite local fish!"

- DARYL POPPER, MASSACHUSETTS CITIZEN SCIENTIST

"Wow! That was a fast 26 weeks. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this study. I learned a lot about fish... available or not, and even more about all the different fish markets available to me!"

- JUDY TARR, MASSACHUSETTS CITIZEN SCIENTIST

**"EAT LIKE A FISH: DIVERSIFYING NEW ENGLAND'S RETAIL MARKETPLACE" IS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.EATINGWITHTHEECOSYSTEM.ORG](http://WWW.EATINGWITHTHEECOSYSTEM.ORG)**