Seafood Market Sustainability Report - Swiss Retailers Aim to be Friends of the Sea

According to a recent survey and analysis run by three environmental organizations - Friend of the Sea, OceanCare and fair-fish - approximately one third of seafood products sold in Switzerland is fished in environmentally unsustainable ways. Retail chains such as Migros, Coop, Manor, Denner, Aldi and Volg and various producers and resellers, such as McDonald’s, Mövenpick, Pizoler and Duport-Aberlé, have provided the data for the survey. They engaged to improve their environmental performance and make their own supplies more sustainable, with the consultancy and support of the organisations, which will record the annual progress.

In Switzerland, aquatic species threatened in the wild, endangered by intensive fisheries, are still offered on the market: bluefin tuna, halibut, North Sea cod, haddock, seabream, sturgeon and its caviar.
Several species available on the shelves are overfished, such as smelts, eel, swordfish as well as ground fish: hake, hoki, black cod, plaice, sole, turbot (if not farmed) and orange roughy. Ground fish including halibut an North Sea cod is mostly fished with bottom trawlers. This fishing method ploughs the seabed, destroying any living organism found on its path, and leads to high level of by-catch of non commercial species, which are thrown back to the sea dead or dying: hundreds of thousands of sharks, rays and thousands tons of corals and sponges. In a few weeks, a bottom trawler can destroy an habitat which would take hundreds of years to recover.

Fish preserved and canned is caught with less harmful fishing method and originates from species (sardines, anchovies, mackerel and tuna with some exceptions, such as bluefin tuna) which are generally more resistant to fishing pressure. Furthermore these species live in large groups, near the surface and are thus fished with more selective methods, which do not impact on the seabed.

Further information:
www.friendofthesea.org
www.fair-fish.ch/aktuell
www.oceancare.org

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