

Is Your Reputation on the Line?

What's in a Name?

By Better Seafood Board

The many species of seafood available today makes fish and shellfish an excellent addition to your menu. But variety can also cause confusion if you use the wrong name for the species. Selling a cheaper fish as though it were a more expensive one has only name – **fraud**.

Fraud is not always intentional. It can be as simple as a misunderstanding or a lack of information on the part of a distributor, grocery store, or restaurant – who themselves may have purchased a misrepresented product. Regardless, ignorance or intentional – both can have a negative impact on your **reputation**. Consumers don't make the distinction – they expect to get what is advertised.



With such a wide range of seafood species available, where can you find the answers to correctly naming seafood species? In the U.S. the seafood name “dictionary” is maintained by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). FDA has developed the *Seafood List* to provide consistent recommendations on market names for seafood sold in the U.S.

Did You Know?

There are over 45 species of fish that can be marketed as snapper, but there is only one - Lutjanus campechanus – that can be called red snapper.

Don't be accused of a “Fish Switch”

Negative publicity is never good for business. Investigative reports on the prevalence of species substitution at restaurants are popular stories with local media. Local consumer-driven “gotcha” stories make for good ratings.

Use FDA's *Seafood List* (available at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/Seafood/ucm113260.htm>) to ensure that the name you list on your menu is the recommended market name for the fish. And work with a trusted supplier to ensure that you receive what you ask for.

Did You Know?

FDA can consider a food product to be misbranded if it is offered for sale under the name of another food.



www.betterseafoodboard.com

Call 1-866-956-4BSB to report a concern with your seafood supplier

Common Reasons for Mislabeling

- Fish may be **incorrectly identified** early in the supply chain (such as at harvest or wholesale) and this incorrect name is carried on through final sale.
- Wholesalers, retailers, or restaurateurs substitute or rename fish species in order to get a **better price** or to **meet consumer demand** for a particular species.
 - Investigative reporters in Toronto found sushi restaurants selling low-cost tilapia as high-priced red snapper.
- Merchants will **coin a name or rename** the fish to make it sound more **appealing** to consumers.
 - “White roughy” is a misleading name used on some menus for basa or swai.

Did You Know?

There are over 50 species of fish that can be marketed as grouper. Yet less expensive species such as tilapia or basa are commonly masqueraded as grouper.

Steps you can take to keep from getting DUPED

- Reference FDA’s *Seafood List* for acceptable names
 - Be clear in purchase specifications
 - Check that container labels match invoices
 - Trust your “gut” (if the price is too good to be true, it probably is)
- Ask your supplier if the fish name is unfamiliar
 - Buy worry-free from members of the National Fisheries Institute (www.aboutseafood.com)

Still have questions?

Check out these websites:

FDA’s Seafood List –

www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/Seafood/ucm113260.htm

Regulatory Fish Encyclopedia – www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/Seafood/RegulatoryFishEncyclopediaRFE/default.htm

FDA website on Economic Deception – www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/Seafood/RegulatoryFishEncyclopediaRFE/ucm071528.htm

Applied Food Technologies – www.appliedfoodtechnologies.com/afthome.html

Seafood Network Information Center – <http://seafood.ucdavis.edu/>

Better Seafood Board – www.betterseafoodboard.com



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