

NOAA launches tool helping seafood importers identify trade requirements

NOAA Fisheries has announced the launch of a new online tool designed to help seafood traders identify importing and exporting requirements.

The new tool, called the Seafood Import and Export Tool, is a step-by-step online tool that uses a series of questions to identify the requirements for certain seafood trade items. After going through the multi-step process, users can “walk away confident that they know which NOAA trade monitoring programs they must comply with for their specific seafood products,” NOAA said.

“More than 85 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported or re-imported after going overseas for processing,” NOAA announced in a release. “NOAA Fisheries oversees four trade monitoring programs that establish reporting and recordkeeping requirements for products entering and leaving U.S. markets.”

The tool contains information for the four different programs, which are: the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP), the Tuna Tracking and Verification Program, the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species International Trade Program, and the Antarctic Marine Living Resources program.

Of the four, the largest by far is SIMP, which covers 13 species and species groups identified as vulnerable to potential illegal, unreported, or unregulated fishing, or seafood fraud. The program requires importers keep chain of custody data for all products coming into the U.S., including harvest and landing data and proper labels on all products.

The program was started in 2018, with products like Atlantic cod, red snapper, swordfish, and tunas. Since then, shrimp has been added to the SIMP program.

The other programs, according to NOAA, are more narrowly focused on specific species, but all set requirements for import and export. For example, the Antarctic Marine Living Resources program establishes import requirements of Chilean sea bass and Antarctic krill to ensure regional conservation measures had been followed.

According to NOAA, providing additional tools to seafood dealers to meet the requirements helps NOAA “ensure our seafood is caught and imported legally.”

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