

# Wegmans Tuna Procurement Policy

## July 2016

### Recommendations for Ecologically Sustainable Sourcing of All Tuna Products

#### Overview:

Our goal is to source tuna only from fisheries that are not overfished. We source from well-managed stocks and from fisheries that use the most current, best practices in methods, bycatch reduction and human welfare. To achieve this goal, we are working to improve transparency and have implemented an audit process. We support the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation's (ISSF) common ground philosophy for supporting tuna sustainability (<http://iss-foundation.org/download-monitor-demo/download-info/common-ground-for-buyer-engagement-in-support-of-tuna-sustainability-improvement/>).

We will make a concerted effort to actively promote products that meet or exceed the benchmarks set in this procurement policy. We work with fishermen, processors and suppliers to achieve our goals of sourcing sustainable tuna. We are proudly working with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) and other industry stakeholders to implement minimum sustainability standards for procurement practices of all tuna. This is a Continuous Improvement Project and as such, is a fluid document, one that will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

#### Our partnership:

We are partners with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP <http://sustainablefish.org>). SFP is a NGO that operates in sustainable seafood through two main principles: information and improvement. Through our partnership with SFP we are able to collect key information about source fisheries. The information collected and evaluated includes scientific name of the species, location of harvest, type of gear used, and fishery certification information.

#### Our policy:

We source from (where possible) Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries, or from an active Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)<sup>1</sup>, or work with suppliers to start a FIP or other credible fishery management protocols. We do not source from any fishery or species listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) red list or vessels listed on any blacklist. We also rely on information from any relevant Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) listings, to avoid sourcing from any overfished stocks. We will not purchase from any company found guilty of activity relevant to the illegal capture and/or trading of tuna, and we discourage building additional capacity.

#### Gear types:

- **Purse seine:**

Current research suggests that harvest methods including the use of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs - natural or artificial floating objects) may result in more bycatch. Bycatch can include sharks, dolphins, juvenile bigeye tuna and sea turtles among others. We support as much FAD-free tuna as possible, with a robust traceability scheme and no transshipment at sea without observers. We encourage purse seine fishing vessels to target free-swimming tuna schools and to stop using entanglement FADs, with the ultimate goal of FAD-free fishing. We also support improved FAD management plans, implemented at the RFMO level and including full retention on vessels. We source from fleets with a minimum of 5% observer coverage unless the RFMO requires 100%. We also recommend that vessels without observer coverage use electronic monitors.

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- **Pole-and-line/Hand line**

We support pole-and-line fisheries when possible. Pole-and-line fisheries have nominal bycatch. However, the fisheries that supply pole-and-line fisheries with bait can have problematic ecological effects, including bycatch and overexploitation of target baitfish species. Therefore, we support the use of sustainable bait. Knowing where the baitfish comes from, the species and the harvest method are fundamental to any minimum level of sustainable pole-and-line fishery.

We strongly recommend and encourage sustainably sourcing baitfish. Our goal is to move toward fisheries that source either farm-raised baitfish or wild baitfish with at least 50% of source fisheries participating in an active or developing FIP. These steps are necessary to ensure bait is not from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishery/human trafficking sources. Observer coverage for fleets must be at or above 5%, with the remainder using electronic monitors.

- **Longline**

We do not support “shark finning” or “gill-rake” removals from rays. We do not support sourcing from fishing vessels that practice either of the two. Sharks or rays legally caught by longline vessels may be harvested as long as the vessels comply with all handling requirements—e.g. all fins, whether naturally attached or detached, must match the source carcass on board.

We insist on the use of circle hooks rather than “J” hooks for fishing gear because circle hooks greatly reduce bycatch. We do not support transshipment at sea and recommend sourcing from fleets with minimum 20% observer coverage. We also recommend that vessels without observer coverage are using electronic monitors. We are moving toward tuna from longline fisheries that employ full bycatch mitigation devices to include seabird deterrents and have proven to reduce bycatch to current best practice levels.

Wegmans’ long-term goal for longline will be one of these options (not listed in preference ranking):

1. MSC Certified source.
2. Source from a FIP that meets Conservation Alliance standards and seeks to employ full bycatch mitigation as the ultimate goal with regular progress reports.
3. Source from a fishery undergoing full assessment by MSC.
4. Source is an ISSF participating company (for canned tuna producers).
5. Source is from RFMO member nations or cooperating non-member nations that are in full compliance with the commission’s conservation management measures.
6. Source is from a fleet with minimum 20% observer coverage. We also recommend that vessels without observer coverage are using electronic monitors.

- **Trolling**

Troll fisheries have negligible bycatch. These fisheries use either jigs (fishing lures) or live bait.

### **Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)**

We will support and make a concerted effort to purchase from existing FIPs and/or help facilitate new FIPs whenever possible.

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### **Traceability**

We source from fisheries whose practices can be maintained without reducing the species' ability to populate. The fishery must also be protective of the environment and not adversely impact any other species in the marine ecosystem. This includes accidental kill, removing their food sources, or damaging their environment. Product is traceable back to its origin/fishing area, including traceability back to the boat.

### **Observer coverage/Transparency/Transshipment at sea/Compliance with fishery closures/Social Responsibility**

We provide annual employee training, which results in improved consumer education. We offer transparency to consumers by assuring all products are labeled or on our website with species common name and/or scientific name, fishing gear (canned tuna), and the country of processing. We support no transshipment at sea without observer coverage and require fishing vessels to comply with fishery closures and RFMO measures. Fishing fleets must work toward a 20% observer goal, with all other fleet vessels electronically monitored. We request that source fisheries are independently audited for traceability. A Marine Resources Assessment Group (MRAG) Americas audit of ISSF-participating companies satisfies this request. Product must be from legal harvest and accurately labeled, and suppliers must have an annual independent audit for traceability. This ensures and maintains strict human rights standards for all products sourced.

### **Supplier/Vessel identification/Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU)**

We ask all our suppliers to provide tuna according to our policy. We do not source from fishing vessels known for IUU/human trafficking and when possible, we source from ISSF-participant suppliers. We request that all supplying companies comply with the ISSF's conservation measures and all supplying large-scale vessels<sup>2</sup> work toward registration on ISSF's ProActive Vessel Register (PVR). As this is a Continuous Improvement Project, no dates for finalization will be set. Registry on the PVR is available to all fleets/vessels at no cost (<http://iss-foundation.org/knowledge-tools/databases/proactive-vessel-register/>). We do not source from companies knowingly procuring product from ships listed on the IUCN red list, Greenpeace blacklist or any officially published blacklist. We support the creation of marine reserves and we do not source from any existing protected areas. Product is not sourced from harvest during fisheries' closure. We also do not support building new vessels other than pole-and-line or hand-line vessels. Finally, we insist that our tuna is from socially responsible<sup>3</sup> sources at each level of procurement, operating under the regulatory frameworks of said countries. All workers must be hired through formalized avenues with document proof of such.

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<sup>1</sup> A Fishery Improvement Project should meet all the following criteria:

- Mobilize commercial players in the supply chain to improve a fishery.
- Be based on an initial assessment of the problems in the fishery and address those issues in greatest need of improvement as a priority.
- Have a public work plan with measurable indicators and an associated budget.
- Have a public commitment by participants to make improvements according to the work plan.
- Have a willingness by participants to make the investments required by the work plan and budget.
- Establish a public system for reporting and tracking progress.

<sup>2</sup> Artisanal day boat small production fishermen may not be listed on PVR register.

<sup>3</sup> Each level operates its business scheme with a positive relationship to the society they operate in.