



JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

CYNTHIA A. HARDING, M.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806
Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Gloria Molina
First District
- Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District
- Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District
- Don Knabe
Fourth District
- Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

August 5, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *J. Fielding*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **MISLABELED SEAFOOD**

On a motion by Supervisor Antonovich on November 20, 2012, the Department of Public Health (DPH) was directed to provide its next steps regarding mislabeled seafood. The December 19, 2012 report to your Board provided a brief outline of the next steps. The April 16, 2013 report provided an update to that report. This is an update on the implementation.

The workgroup of DPH representatives; seafood distributors, including American Fish and Seafood Company, H&N Food International, Southwind Foods Company, Great American Seafood Imports Company, and Pacific American Fish Company; and representatives of the Chinese-American and Japanese Restaurant Associations determined that retailers, as well as consumers, needed to be better informed of the measures they could take regarding seafood mislabeling and species substitution. To that end, DPH developed the attached two guideline materials: one for restaurant/ market owners and another for consumers. Both have been posted on the DPH Environmental Health Division website, and can be viewed at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/AreasofInterest/food.htm> under "What's New."

Beginning July 2013, field inspectors began distributing the "What Restaurants and Markets Need to Know about Seafood Mislabeleding" guidelines to food facility operators who offer seafood for sale. Discrepancies observed by inspectors during a routine inspection or as a result of a complaint investigation will be documented and tracked. DPH will provide a report of seafood labeling and species discrepancies for the first quarter of FY 2013-14 in the next update to your Board in October 2013.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:pk
PH:1204:004

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

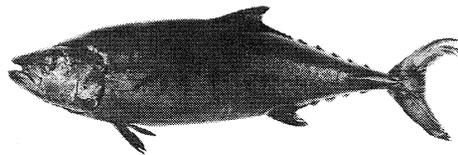
What You Need to Know About Seafood Mislabeling

What do you need to know about ordering or purchasing seafood?

Mislabeling or substituting seafood is a violation of the California Health and Safety Code. Restaurants, markets, and other food facilities have to tell you the truth about the seafood they offer. The species, country of origin, weight portions, and/or size must be accurately presented.

Mislabeling or substituting seafood may pose a health risk to some consumers.

Escolar, pictured to the right, is sometimes mislabeled and sold as "white tuna." *White tuna* is not a real species. Escolar can cause gastrointestinal illness or other health problems for some people. If a menu or label says *white tuna*, ask the restaurant or market staff for more information.



Escolar

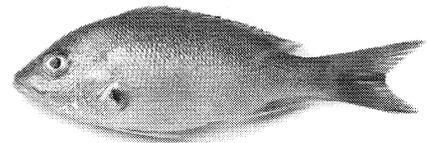
Are you getting what you paid for?

Some seafood items are advertised and priced as premium items, such as *Wild-caught Salmon* or *Orange Roughy*. Customers who want to enjoy a great seafood meal may pay top dollar for a premium item, but receive a less expensive substitution, such as *Farm-raised Salmon* or *Swai*. The chart at the right lists other examples of common seafood substitutions.

Do you suspect seafood mislabeling or substitution?

If you suspect seafood mislabeling or substitution, contact Environmental Health at (626) 430-5200 during business hours, 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday; call the 24-hour Hotline at (888) 700-9995; or send an e-mail to ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov.

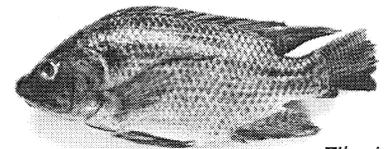
Seafood Offered	Actual Species or Less Expensive Substitute
White Tuna (does not exist)	Escolar
Snapper Red Snapper	Rockfish Tai Seabream Tilapia Ocean Perch Pollock Cod
Orange Roughy	Swai
Halibut	Striped Bass Fluke Turbot Seabass Flounder
Wild-Caught Salmon	Farm-Raised Salmon



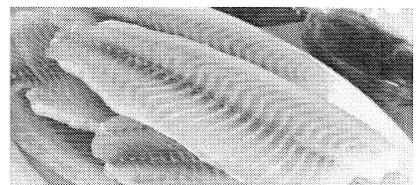
Red Snapper



Red Snapper Fillet



Tilapia



Tilapia Fillet

What Restaurants and Markets Need to Know About Seafood Mislabeling

Protect your customers and your business from illegal seafood substitutions or mislabeling.

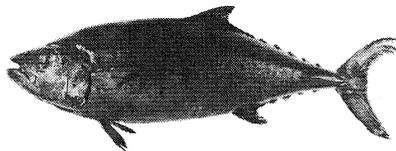
Why you should avoid buying or selling mislabeled seafood:

It's illegal. Mislabeling or substituting seafood is a violation of California Health and Safety Code, Section 114087. Environmental Health conducts special inspections to protect consumers from the sale of adulterated, misrepresented, and/or mislabeled seafood.

Deliberate violations of the law will be addressed during inspections. Violations include failure to disclose accurate information about a seafood species, country of origin, weight portions, and/or size.

Mislabeled or substituting seafood may pose a health risk to some customers.

Escolar, pictured to the right, is sometimes mislabeled and sold as "white tuna." White tuna is not a real species. Escolar can cause gastrointestinal illness or other health problems for some customers.



Escolar

It is important to sell and offer honestly presented seafood in order to protect customers' health.

Tips for buying and selling safe seafood:

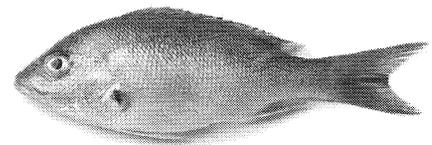
Compare the label on the food container or packaging with the invoice or receipt to make sure it matches what you ordered.

Remember, *white tuna* does not exist. If your invoice says *white tuna* or it is missing information such as species or country of origin, do not accept delivery. Return the product to the supplier or distributor, and ask for more information, or contact your Health Inspector for advice.

Questions? We're here to help!

If you suspect seafood mislabeling or substitution, contact Environmental Health at (626) 430-5200 during business hours, 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday; call the 24-hour Hotline at (888) 700-9995; or send an e-mail to ehmail@ph.lacounty.gov.

Seafood Offered	Actual Species or Less Expensive Substitute
White Tuna (does not exist)	Escolar
Snapper Red Snapper	Rockfish Tai Seabream Tilapia Ocean Perch Pollock Cod
Orange Roughy	Swai
Halibut	Striped Bass Fluke Turbot Seabass Flounder
Wild-Caught Salmon	Farm-Raised Salmon



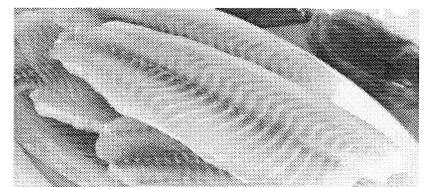
Red Snapper



Red Snapper Fillet



Tilapia



Tilapia Fillet