



MARKET REJECTION OF ORANGE ROUGHY

July 2010

Orange roughy fisheries are a testament to unsustainable fishing. The species is long-lived (orange roughy more than 120 years old have been found), slow growing and late maturing, making it extremely vulnerable to overfishing. In New Zealand, the orange roughy fishery has been managed under the quota management system since the 1980s, but under that system the stocks have been decimated.

The state of New Zealand's orange roughy fishery speaks for itself:

- All the stocks are now overfished (below 30% of their population remaining)
- Three stocks were fished to collapse (below 10%) and are now closed – one reached a low of 3%
- Two further stocks are at or near the point of collapse and may be closed shortly
- All the stocks still being fished are in decline or their population trend is unknown
- The only fishing method used to catch orange roughy is destructive bottom trawling

The quota management system, which gives ownership of fishing quotas to the fishing industry, is purported to foster a long-term view and care for the sustainability of stocks. However, the New Zealand fishing industry opposed the closure of all three collapsed orange roughy stocks. On two occasions a major quota-holder has legally overturned quota cuts to another stock close to collapse. The gross overfishing has occurred in a matter of three decades – essentially, the damage to humpback whale populations last century has been wrought on orange roughy stocks in the past 30 years. This damage has been done almost entirely within the law, as the management system has legally allowed fishing levels well beyond what is sustainable.

As a result of the overfishing, stock collapse, poor management, destructive fishing method and the inherent vulnerability of the species to fishing pressure, many companies in the seafood supply chain have chosen not to trade in this species.

"Whole Foods Market is in the process of expanding and further developing our Quality Standards for seafood. As a part of this process, we re-evaluated orange roughy. Based on the species' life history and unsustainable catch levels, it's clear that this species is very vulnerable to depletion. Rather than Whole Foods Market contributing to the decline of orange roughy, we've chosen to discontinue selling it and to promote other alternatives."

Carrie Brownstein

Seafood Quality Standards Coordinator, Whole Foods Market

Marks & Spencer (UK)

One of the UK's leading retailers, with more than 450 stores located throughout the UK. Orange roughy is on Marks & Spencer's prohibited list.

www.fishonline.org/site/www/buying_eating/2007_Docs/SupermarketSurvey2007.doc

"Steer clear of deep-sea species. We know little about the breeding patterns of fish such as orange roughy and blue ling – and catches are plummeting. M&S has never sold deep-sea fish."

Waitrose (UK)

Operates 179 stores and represents 3.9% of UK supermarket sales. Orange roughy is one of the species Waitrose has removed from sale in recent years.

www.fishonline.org/site/www/buying_eating/2007_Docs/SupermarketSurvey2007.doc

Sainsbury's (UK)

UK retailer with 740 stores and more than 16 million customers visits per week. Orange roughy is one of the species Sainsbury's has removed from sale in recent years.

www.fishonline.org/site/www/buying_eating/2007_Docs/SupermarketSurvey2007.doc

Carrefour (France)

France's largest and the world's second largest retail chain, operating 5,500 stores across France and over 15,000 stores in 31 countries. Carrefour removed orange roughy from sale across France in 2009.

<http://www.carrefour.com/cdc/commerce-responsable/notre-engagement-pour-l-environnement/s-approvisionner-de-facon-responsable/approvisionnement.html>

Casino (France)

Casino is the world's 17th largest retail chain, operating 9,400 stores across France as well as 1,600 stores in 10 countries in South America and Asia. Casino removed orange roughy from sale across France in 2007.

<http://www.groupe-casino.fr/fr/Des-produits-respectueux-de-l.html>

Ahold (USA)

Subsidiary of Netherlands-based grocery giant Royal Ahold. Operates around 700 stores in eastern US.

Ahold announced in 2008 that it would stop selling orange roughy, shark and Chilean sea bass (toothfish) in its Stop & Shop and Giant Landover stores.

http://www.giantfood.com/living_well/healthy_living/seafood_sustainability.htm

"We made the decision to discontinue Chilean sea bass, orange roughy, and all sharks due to these fisheries being in severe trouble"

The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P) (USA)

A&P operates more than 450 stores under 6 subsidiaries, mostly in the New England region. In November 2008, A&P committed to not sell orange roughy, shark, bluefin tuna and Atlantic halibut in any of its stores.

<http://go.greenpeaceusa.org/seafood/scorecards/a&p.pdf>

Trader Joe's (USA)

Trader Joe's has close to 350 stores, mainly located in California. Trader Joe's stopped selling Chilean sea bass in 2005, orange roughy in July of 2009, and red snapper in March of 2010.

<http://www.traderjoes.com/about/customer-updates.asp>

Trader Joe's described the removal of these species from sale as *"Based on customer feedback and in support of our work to source sustainable seafood"*

Whole Foods Market (USA)

Whole Foods Market is the world's largest purveyor of natural and organic products with 275 stores in the US, Canada and UK. The company committed to discontinue selling orange roughy due to concerns about its vulnerability.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/press-center/reports4/carting-away-the-oceans>

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Wegmans (USA)

Wegmans operates 75 stores across five states in the eastern US. In June 2009 Wegmans announced that it would add orange roughy to its list of seafood not offered due to fishery management concerns.

<http://www.wegmans.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/MEBDetailView?langId=-1&storeId=10052&catalogId=1&productId=671313>

"Orange Roughy is a slow-growing, deep-water fish and our seafood specialists do not believe current fishing guidelines allow the population to replenish. In addition, bottom trawling, the only fishing method used for this species, damages the ocean floor."

Compass Group (USA)

Compass Group, the leading food service company in North America, introduced a sustainable seafood purchasing initiative in 2006 and has since taken 1.5 million pounds of unsustainable seafood off its catalogues, including orange roughy.

<http://www.cgnad.com/default.asp?action=article&ID=686>

"Not only have others in the industry followed Compass Group's lead, but its corporate clients and suppliers have committed to improving the sustainability of the seafood supply."

Costco (USA)

Costco is a US wholesaler operating 569 warehouses in the USA and eight other countries. The company announced in July 2010 that it was ending its trade in seven species including orange roughy.

<http://phx.corporate-ir.net/phoenix.zhtml?c=83830&p=irol-govhighlights> (Seafood and Sustainability)

"We are ceasing, subject to current inventories and existing commitments to suppliers, the sale of seven wild species that have been nearly universally identified as at great risk."

ABS Seafood (USA)

San Francisco seafood distributor ABS Seafood announced in July 2010 that it was no longer selling orange roughy and Chilean sea bass, and would cease selling bluefin tuna by the end of the year.

<http://www.seafoodsource.com/newsarticledetail.aspx?id=4294997960>

"ABS is aware of the problems facing our oceans. As a seafood business it is our responsibility to care for the sea and the animals in it. If we want to save our oceans, we need to work together. One small business can't do it alone. But we're going to step up and do our part, starting right now."

Overwaitea (Canada)

Overwaitea Food Group is Western Canada's leading grocery retailer, operating about 125 supermarkets. In June 2009 Overwaitea announced that yellowfin tuna, Chilean sea bass, orange roughy and other non-sustainable seafood will no longer be sold at 117 Overwaitea Food Group stores in B.C. and Alberta.

<http://www.vancouversun.com/Life/Overwaitea+outlets+Alberta+sustainable+seafood/1687085/story.html>

Loblaw (Canada)

Canada's largest food distributor and retail chain, Loblaw, announced a sustainability policy in February 2010 and removed Chilean sea bass, orange roughy, skate and shark from sale, leaving in their place empty trays with signs pointing out these are species at risk.

<http://www.thestar.com/unassigned/article/760679--loblaw-guides-consumers-towards-sustainable-seafood>

Sobeys (Canada)

Canada's second-largest grocery chain, Sobeys, is phasing several at-risk fish species out of its product chain, including shark, skate, orange roughy and Chilean sea bass.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/Business/1184512.html>

"Delisting is not the first step," said David Smith, Sobeys vice-president of sustainability. "The first step is to understand the problem."

Martin Bosley (New Zealand)

Chef Martin Bosley of Martin Bosley's Restaurant, Oriental Parade, Wellington has supported the Forest and Bird Best Fish Guide and refuses to serve "worst choice" orange roughy.

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ourchangingworld/20071122>

"We won't use orange roughy here at all and the last time it came into the restaurant was by mistake – we had a new guy who ordered it, didn't know the rules around it, and we made him do the walk of shame back to the fish supplier."

Martin Bosley
Martin Bosley's Restaurant, Wellington

