



North Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

Bluefin tuna are severely depleted and still being overfished. This fish is the largest species of tuna reaching lengths of up to ten feet long and weights of 1,500 pounds. Bluefin tuna are the world's most valuable fish for sushi because of its high oil content. The high demand bluefin has taken its toll leaving severely depleted populations throughout its range. Bluefin also contains elevated levels of mercury and PCBs.

Where they live

Bluefin tuna are usually found in temperate seas but because it's one of the few fish that has the ability to regulate its body temperature they often feed in cool northern seas that hold an abundance of prey species. They range from the Gulf of Mexico north into Canada at least as far as Newfoundland and from Norway down to North Africa. The Mediterranean Sea is a major spawning and nursery area for N. Atlantic Bluefin. .

How they're caught

Fishermen use a variety of methods to catch bluefin tuna, including longlines, pole and line, fish traps and purse seines. Recently Bluefin are being "ranched" where juvenile fish are caught by seining and then transferred to floating pens and grown to market size. This practice is exceptionally damaging to their population as none of those fish are ever allowed to spawn.

Why they're in trouble

The Atlantic population has declined by nearly 90% since the 1970s. Fishery scientists have recommended to the managers to reduce the amount of bluefin killed for many years and this scientific advice has fallen on deaf ears because of their high market value. Overfishing is the biggest threat to Bluefin populations. An individual Bluefin can be worth over \$30,000.00 at the Tokyo fish auction.