

# Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch



## Proposed Fishackathon Problem Statement

### Challenge:

A significant of businesses and consumers want to purchase seafood from environmentally sustainable fisheries and aquaculture operations. Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program assesses the environmental performance of fisheries and aquaculture operations supplying the North American marketplace and generates public seafood recommendations which can be found at [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org) and on our Seafood Watch App.

We have learned, however, that there are challenges with how information flows through the seafood supply chain with respect to the common attributes:

- Seafood common/market name
- Scientific/latin name
- Where the fish is caught or farmed
- How the fish is caught or farmed

Without this integral information, businesses and consumers cannot accurately identify the corresponding Seafood Watch recommendation.

Therefore, we are interested in applications that can help maintain a flow of consistent information throughout the supply chain from sea to table. Improved traceability of seafood can help inform consumers and businesses about the sustainability of their purchases, and allow for better monitoring and reporting on corporate commitments to sustainable seafood purchasing. Improved traceability also helps ensure that the seafood item is from a legal source.

We have found that there are a few areas in the seafood supply chain where information flow breaks down and impedes our ability to understand where our seafood comes from and therefore, its sustainability status:

- Fishermen do not always report on the attributes listed above when selling to the initial seafood buyer (wholesaler, processor, auction house, etc.). Many still use paper and don't capture all of the attributes. How can we use technology to make that easier?
- The seafood supplier needs to match what they are selling to the corresponding Seafood Watch recommendation for their clients who have sustainable seafood commitments (the top retailers and food service companies in North America all have such commitments). But when the seafood is processed it loses many of these attributes and goes from 'Atlantic cod caught by gillnet off of Georges Bank' to 'Beer battered whitefish 4 oz portion'. How can we better track information as seafood products change hands and product forms?
- Seafood Watch needs to communicate our database of more than 2,700 seafood recommendations (which vary based on where and how the seafood was caught or farmed) to consumers and businesses in a usable format. How can we use technology to improve our ability to deliver complex seafood recommendations to a consumer without overwhelming them?

Monterey Bay Aquarium will have sample datasets on hand so that Fishackathon participants can use their skills and manipulate the data in ways that would inform the development of prototypes to help resolve some of these challenges. The winning prototype will receive a weekend stay in Monterey with complimentary tickets to Monterey Bay Aquarium complete with a behind-the-scenes tour. The winner will also be featured in our Seafood Watch blog and social media to the thousands of consumers and businesses who are making seafood choices for healthy oceans.