



# Fishery Basics – Seafood Markets

## When Are Different Fish at the Market?

Due to the migratory patterns of some **species**, spawning seasons of others, management measures, and/or environmental conditions, specific **fisheries** operate only during certain times of the year. Thus fresh seafood is only available for purchase during the time of year the fishery operates. Below is a table highlighting the **commercial fishing seasons** for the 7 fisheries included in the **California Fisheries** section of this website.

Fishery	Open Season
Pacific Sardines	All year
Spot Prawns	August –April (North of Pt. Arguello) February – October (South of Pt. Arguello)
Sole	All year
Albacore Tuna	All year, but catches usually occur from June-November
Chinook Salmon	*2011 Season- May 1 – Oct. 14
Dungeness Crab	Nov. 15 – Jun. 30 (Central CA) Dec. 1 – July 15 (Northern CA)
Market Squid	All year, but usually April-November (Central CA) and October-March (Southern CA)
* The commercial salmon season varies each year due management measures that are designed to rebuild populations of the species.	

The availability of specific fishery products in different regions of California also varies over the year. Therefore, the **Institute for Fisheries Resources** provides information about when fish are in season and where you can buy locally harvested fish in eight regions along California's coast:

- [Fort Bragg Area](#)
- [Humboldt Bay Area](#)
- [Los Angeles Area](#)
- [Monterey Bay Area](#)
- [Morro Bay Area](#)
- [North Bay Area](#)
- [San Diego Area](#)
- [San Francisco Area](#)
- [Santa Barbara Area](#)

Advancements in **aquaculture** operations means that many fish products that were previously only available seasonally are now available year-round. In the United States, **mollusks** (e.g.,



# Fishery Basics – Seafood Markets

oysters, clams, and mussels) account for two-thirds of the marine aquaculture production. Salmon accounts for approximately 25% and shrimp account for approximately 10% of the remaining marine aquaculture production in the U.S.

**Flash freezing** is another process that ensures the availability of many species of seafood year-round. Flash freezing is the process in which a product is quickly frozen by subjecting it to temperatures well below the freezing point of water (0°C, 32°F). This technique prevents the development of large ice crystals within the tissues of the fish. If this process is completed soon after a fish is caught, the resulting product, when thawed properly, is **considered** to be as good as fresh fish.

## References

California Department of Fish and Game. 2011 commercial fish business licenses [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): Department of Fish and Game; c2011 [cited 2011 May 19]. Available from: [http://www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/commfishbus/cfb\\_fees.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/commfishbus/cfb_fees.html)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. **The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010**. Report. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department; 2010.

Institute for fisheries resources [Internet]. San Francisco (CA): The Institute for Fisheries Resources; c2008 [cited 2011 May 19]. Available from: <http://www.ifrfish.org/>

Leschin-Hoar C. Taking stock in fish [Internet]. 2009 Jun 17 [cited 2011 May 19]. Available from: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124421534407589317.html>

National Marine Fisheries Service. **Imports and Exports of Fishery Products Annual Summary 2008**. Report. Washington (DC): Department of Commerce; 2008.

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. **Description of the U.S. West Coast Commercial Fishing Fleet and Seafood Processors**. Report. Corvallis (OR): Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; 2000.

Wright A. Neptune's table: a view of America's ocean fisheries. Silver Spring (MD): National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; 2002.