



ALLIANCE™

<https://www.globalseafood.org>

Responsibility

# Certification groups criticize Seafood Watch downgrade of Chilean farmed trout to the 'avoid' list

8 December 2022

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

## Latest ranking stirs controversy amongst third-party certification bodies

Major third-party aquaculture certification groups are criticizing a recent decision by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch ratings program to downgrade Chilean farmed trout to its "avoid" list.

Seafood Watch, the influential seafood sustainability assessment program, advised that rainbow trout farmed in Chile's Region X (Los Lagos) in marine net pens "should be avoided."

"The high use of antimicrobials and pesticides to control bacterial diseases and parasitic sea lice and the potential development of antimicrobial resistance across Chile are significant concerns," the organization **wrote in its decision posted online**

**(<https://www.seafoodwatch.org/recommendation/trout/rainbow-trout-35509>)**. "In Region X, rainbow trout are treated, on average, 1.17 times per site per year with antimicrobials listed as highly important for human medicine by the World Health Organization and are also treated multiple times with pesticides. Determining the origin, drivers, and scale of resistance is challenging, and this is an active area of research in Chile."



A recent decision by Seafood Watch to list Chilean farmed trout on the “avoid” list has triggered criticism from third-party certification programs, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the Global Seafood Alliance’s (GSA) Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certifications.

The organization said that the “widespread, repetitive and prolonged use of antimicrobials on rainbow trout (and Atlantic salmon) farms likely contributes to resistance.” In addition, it claimed that “large-scale escape events and trickle losses continue to occur.”

A promotional banner for Best Seafood Practices. On the left, there are two small images: one of a person in a yellow protective suit handling fish in a processing facility, and another of a fishing boat on the ocean. The main text reads: "A comprehensive solution for the wild seafood supply chain." To the right, there are three checkmarks with corresponding text: "Crew rights", "Food safety", and "Environmental responsibility". The Best Seafood Practices logo is on the far right, with a "LEARN MORE" button and a right-pointing arrow.

(<https://bspcertification.org/>).

“Even though rainbow trout are established in the wild due to historical stocking, escaped farmed trout pose a high risk to wild, native species through predation and resource competition,” wrote Seafood Watch on its website.

This latest update is part of a growing list of controversial rankings, such as the recent **red listing of American-caught Atlantic lobster triggering criticism** (<https://www.globalseafood.org/advocate/maine-lobster-industry-speaks-out-against-seafood-watch-red-listing/>). Third-party certification groups – the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the Global Seafood Alliance’s (GSA) Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification programs – voiced their objections to the decision.

“Retailers and foodservice buyers, as well as consumers, can be assured that the rainbow trout that they’re purchasing from BAP-certified farms in Chile are responsibly produced and 100-percent compliant with BAP standards,” said Steve Hedlund, communications manager for GSA.

ASC said the issues raised by Seafood Watch are moot, arguing that “if it’s ASC certified, you can be assured that it’s been responsibly produced.” It said that any concerns about Chilean farmed trout are addressed by the ASC’s standards for salmon farms – the requirement to earn the eco-label.

“This overrides any rating that a region may have been given,” said an ASC spokesperson. “Consumers and buyers from both retail and foodservice sector can continue buying ASC-certified rainbow trout farmed from Chile with confidence.”

**Follow the *Advocate* on Twitter [@GSA\\_Advocate](https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate) ([https://twitter.com/GSA\\_Advocate](https://twitter.com/GSA_Advocate)).**

## Author

---



**RESPONSIBLE SEAFOOD ADVOCATE**

[editor@globalseafood.org](mailto:editor@globalseafood.org) (<mailto:editor@globalseafood.org>).

Copyright © 2024 Global Seafood Alliance

All rights reserved.