



San Diego Seafood Market Study

*A summary for the East
African community*

Spring 2014



Synopsis

1. There is demand for local seafood, especially fish and some 'new' species given the chance to try them.
2. Inconvenience in accessing and preparing seafood, expense, health concerns, and unfamiliarity with local seafood limit local seafood consumption in this community
3. Addressing barriers will require a combination of outreach & communication, cultural sensitivity and increased accessibility within neighborhoods.

Demand exists

Top 5 motivations for buying local are healthy and fresh protein, knowing source of food, saving money, reducing food miles, access to cooking demonstrations.

Fish preferred. Of the locally landed species, participants most preferred yellowtail (preference rating of 4.2/5) bluefin tuna (3.8), sablefish (3.5), and swordfish (3.25). Over half of participants said, however, that they would eat white seabass, rock crab and red ogo seaweed again now that they'd tried it.



Amounts wanted. 31% of people said they'd buy 4-6 lbs, 23% said 2-4 lbs and 46% said 2 lbs or less of seafood per visit. Most said they'd buy for 3-4 people (40%) or 5 or more people (36%). 75% said they'd buy 2 or more species, and that they currently buy seafood monthly or more frequently.

Willingness to pay. Over 1/3 said they'd pay 20% or more for local seafood, 20% would pay 10-20% more and 15% would pay 5-10% more.



Introduction

As with most urban centers, there is a desire in San Diego for healthier diets and lifestyles, and maintenance of cultural heritage. These needs can be partially met with more access to local fresh, healthy seafood yet there is little to no connection between San Diego's mid-city and the fishing community.

As part of a project to identify the barriers limiting local seafood sourced in our waters from reaching our plates, we held a seafood tasting event at Tuna Harbor on 9/7/2013 for a group of East African Women with the assistance of the United Women of East Africa. Chefs, fishermen, aquaculturists, nutritionists and scientists introduced all aspects of local species, and participants provided information about eating and shopping habits, what they would like to see offered in local seafood sales, and thoughts about sustainability.

A summary of project results is presented here including evidence of a demand for San Diego seafood bought directly from producers, barriers to buying local, and suggestions for overcoming barriers.



Project scientists

Theresa Sinicrope Talley, California Sea Grant, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD. tstalley@ucsd.edu

Adina Batnitzky, Department of Sociology, University of San Diego. batnitzky@sandiego.edu



Barriers to buying local

Why don't people buy more fish? The main reasons given are that seafood is too expensive (agreement rating of 4.2/5), is not in stores commonly frequented (4.3), is messy (3.3), is not usually appealing (3.1), and may contain contaminants (3.0).

Food habits don't match local supply. The most commonly purchased seafoods are imported to Southern California and include fresh or frozen salmon (39% of responses), canned tuna (23%), tilapia (14%), catfish/swai (8%), and fresh or frozen tuna (8%) (see shopping cart).

Inability to travel. 70% of people said they'd travel less than 15 min for local seafood, and only 8% said they'd go every week or two.

Uncertain about "sustainable seafood." 81% didn't provide an answer when asked what sustainable seafood meant to them. Of the responses received, human health (seafood safety and nutrition) was included in 9% of answers, and aspects of food justice (access, affordability and variety) were included in 6% of answers. This indicates that common messages about responsibly sourced seafood (environmental and fishery protections, economic and social stability of seafood producers) are not reaching this demographic group; and the concerns of this group are not being met by seafood marketing and education groups.



Overcoming barriers

Raise public awareness about the value of buying San Diego seafood (responsibly sourced, supports the local economy) and the safety of local seafood can address several barriers, including the lack of familiarity with local species, health and toxicity concerns, and uncertainty about sustainability.

Cultural based outreach. Consideration of culture in determining and delivering outreach messages will help this community to maintain their culture and make messages more meaningful. For example, cooking demonstrations or classes can feature traditional spices and ingredients with local ingredients.

Encourage grassroots solutions. Create bottom-up pressure for a diversity of local seafood species. Encourage adventurousness: take an outing to the docks, and try new seafoods. Even a little of a diversity of seafood is healthy for you, the environment and the economy.

Neighborhood seafood. Increasing availability of seafood in neighborhoods and in frequented markets will improve access and increase interest in local seafood and support of the fishing community.