

All Caught Up

Our seafood choices can make life easier or harder for animals in the ocean.

An ocean of difference

There are many ways to fish and some are safer for marine life than others. Part of making sustainable seafood choices means fishing in ways that are kind to animals. If we use unsustainable methods, we can catch animals we don't mean to, called bycatch, or collect too much and make seafood populations decline. Critters can also get caught on hooks, eat gear, or get tangled in fishing lines.

One patient that knows a lot about the dangers of unsustainable gear is [Calafia](#), a sea lion that was entangled in fishing line in Mexico. [This video](#) shows how we collaborated with partners in Mexico to rescue Calafia using a new sedative designed by The Marine Mammal Center team. Can you find the part of the video that explains why this sedative is so great for marine mammal rescues? After we disentangled Calafia and set her free, she surprised us by reuniting with a pup we didn't know she had!

Time to get tangled

To see what Calafia experienced while she was entangled, grab a rubber band and loop it on your hand so it wraps around your thumb and pinky. Hold your hand in the air and try to remove the rubber band without using anything to help you. Hard, huh? Now you know what it's like for entangled marine mammals that can't get free with their flippers! To make things worse, when marine mammals try to free themselves they often get tangled even tighter, making it almost impossible for them to escape.

To make sure Calafia and other animals don't get hurt by fishing gear, it's important we use gear that's animal friendly or buy seafood from companies that do. If you're not sure what animal friendly fishing gear is, don't worry! Check out [these descriptions and videos](#) from our partners at Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch to learn how different types of gear affect animals and how we can limit their negative impacts. Watch a few videos that interest you and circle the key words below if you hear them. Can you remember what they mean?

Trawling	Dredging	Gillnets	Circle hook
Bycatch	Ghost fishing	Entanglement	
Trolling lines	Fish aggregating devices	Streamer lines	

Animal-friendly gear is great, but not all seafood businesses use it yet. That means it might be hard to find a sustainable option of your favorite seafood caught with this gear. That's ok! You can use resources like Seafood Watch to find alternative, sustainable options. You might not eat exactly what you planned for dinner, but you can discover new fish with similar taste and give yourself a "flipper" on the back for making a choice that protects marine animals and the ocean.

Thank you!



Make your own sustainable seafood guide!

Collaboration was an important part of freeing Calafia, and an important part of encouraging people to use animal-friendly gear, too! To get your friends and family excited about sustainable gear, make your own version of a Seafood Watch page so you can teach people about tasty options that don't hurt animals.

Materials:

- Seafood Watch information (available through the Seafood Watch App and [webpage](#), or this [PDF](#) if wifi is in short supply)
- Paper
- Coloring materials

Instructions:

1. Look through the Seafood Watch App, webpage, or PDF and find a sustainable option of your favorite seafood.
2. If you don't eat seafood, find something your family likes, a local species, or a species from a place you'd like to visit.
3. Grab a sheet of paper and design your own guide for that species using Seafood Watch as inspiration. Does your favorite have different recommendations depending on how it was caught? Create your own red, yellow, green categories for your favorites so you remember what to look for when purchasing fish.
4. Add illustrations to really catch people's attention!
5. Show your guide to your family and friends and tell them why this species is sustainable.
6. Encourage them to check out Seafood Watch and eat seafood caught with animal-friendly gear!