



for a living planet®

WWF-SA's communications surrounding "Not-assessed" species in relation to the WWF-SASSI Participant commitments

WWF-SA works with a number of key South African retailers, suppliers and restaurants through the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme in order to create a market incentive that drives positive change in the environmental sustainability of source fisheries / farms. This is achieved by Participants making time-bound commitments to sustainable seafood which are informed by the WWF-SASSI species listings. Essentially, the Participant commitments define a strategy to preferentially sell Green-list species and to only sell species from the Orange- or Red-list that originate from fisheries / farms that are in a "Under Improvement".

Bearing the above in mind, it is important to note that WWF-SASSI does not have a listing for all seafood species that are being sold on the South African market. There are more than 1000 different species of seafood being sold by Participants alone and incorporating them all onto the WWF-SASSI list would be challenging as, along with constantly adding new species to the WWF-SASSI list, current species listings also need to be updated at least every 3 to 5 years. Therefore, WWF-SASSI embarks on an annual prioritisation process to determine which new species need to be included into the WWF-SASSI list, this is informed by three considerations:

- 1) Is it a species with an associated conservation concern; or
- 2) Is it a species that is relevant to the South African market in terms of volumes sold, or
- 3) Is it a species of relevance to WWF-SA partner/supporting organisations.

Interested and affected parties also have the opportunity to provide input should they believe there is a species that meets the above criteria that has not been addressed by the WWF-SASSI listing, however the final decision to include a species in the WWF-SASSI listing is held by WWF-SA.

With regard to the WWF-SASSI Participants public-facing commitments, all Participants have stated that by a self-determined date they will only procure and sell seafood species that are:

- 1) Certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for wild-capture species or by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) for farmed species (the end-product of these species does not need to carry the MSC or ASC ecolabel, however the species must be included in the scope of the certification, be defined as a target stock and/or be within the unit of certification that is ultimately certified), or;
- 2) On the WWF-SASSI Green-list; or
- 3) Sourced from fisheries / farms that are classified as "Under Improvement". More detailed information on what classifies as "Under Improvement" can be found in the [WWF-SASSI communications around species Under Improvement](http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-participants/) document that can be downloaded from <http://wwfsassi.co.za/sassi-participants/>.

It is important to note that, while Participants may choose to approach their commitments differently, WWF-SA's position is that these commitments relate only to species that appear on the WWF-SASSI listing. These targets therefore exclude species that are currently "Not-assessed" by WWF-SASSI. While WWF-SA has worked with Participants to identify potential environmental sustainability concerns associated with these "Not-assessed" species, until a species is formally adopted onto the WWF-SASSI listing, WWF-SA cannot hold Participants publically accountable to sustainability commitments around these species.

That is not to say that “Not-assessed” species are not relevant and WWF-SA is already collaborating with all Participants on addressing any potential sustainability concerns associated with currently “Not-assessed” species. These potential concerns are identified by consulting across the broader WWF network, reviewing information from other credible seafood sustainability guides and by conducting desktop research on the relevant source fishery’s / farm’s environmental sustainability performance. Furthermore, as a disincentive to specifically targeting species for procurement due to their “Not-assessed” status, WWF-SA will include “Not-assessed” species into the WWF-SASSI prioritization process for the next WWF-SASSI listing update if:

- 1) The “Not-assessed” species comprises more than 15% of any individual Participant’s seafood portfolio in terms of volume sold; or
- 2) If a “Not-Assessed” species comprises between 5% and 15% of any individual Participant’s seafood portfolio in terms of volume sold and it is relevant in the same proportion to the majority of Participant’s seafood portfolios.

In terms of transparency, the proportion of all Participants “Assessed” versus “Not-assessed” species is communicated in the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme Annual Report, this both in terms of the number of different species traded as well as volume of species traded. The expectation from WWF-SA of all Participants is that the proportion of “Not-assessed” species, in terms of volume traded, decreases on an annual basis. The only exception to this expectation being if there is a distinct conservation gain to be had by increasing the procurement of specific “Not-assessed” species, this would also have to be publically communicated by the relevant Participants.

In conclusion, WWF-SA does not necessarily want Participants to discontinue sourcing from fisheries / farms only because a species they harvest / produce is “Not-assessed”, especially if this negates a market incentive to work towards improved environmental sustainability. Broadly, the idea behind the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme is to work with large public-facing seafood vendors in order to create strong market incentives for seafood sustainability that smaller seafood vendors can support and align with.