



SOUTH AFRICA



## WWF-SASSI RETAILER/SUPPLIER PARTICIPATION SCHEME REPORT 2022

**About this report**

This eighth edition of the WWF-SASSI Retailer/Supplier Participation Scheme report focuses on progress made by South Africa's top seafood vendors that have been working towards a sustainable seafood supply chain. It also reflects the importance for the environment of procuring sustainable seafood and the importance of using the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.

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WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations with over 6 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF South Africa is a national office in the global WWF network. Started in South Africa in 1968, we are a local NGO with a vision of building a sustainable and equitable future in which humans and nature thrive. We work to champion the Earth's capacity to provide a source of inspiration, sustainable food, fresh water and clean energy for all. For Nature. For You.

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**“Sustainability can no longer be a buzzword used in boardrooms and strategic annual reports. This goes for sustainable use of marine resources too. It needs to be a demonstrated and lived approach to how we value and use natural resources - at an individual, national and sector level.”**

# THE SCIENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

The ocean's resources are being depleted faster than they can be replenished. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that 94% of the world's fish population is fully used, overfished or in crisis.

The ocean is also warming from human-induced climate change. And the changing climate is leading to further crises, such as the melting of the polar ice sheets and coral bleaching due to ocean acidification, which stresses vulnerable marine species and ocean ecosystems.

One of the best ways to protect our oceans is foremost to safeguard areas which create sanctuaries for fish stocks to be replenished, secondly, to reduce fishing pressure on depleted species by procuring a broad range of sustainable seafood species and finally, to actively implement less destructive fishing practices to avoid habitat degradation and incidental "bycatch" to prevent the capturing and killing of non-targeted marine species.

On a global scale, monumental international treaties have been signed towards helping to address these ocean crises. At the end of 2022, in Montreal, Canada, the United Nations (UN) biodiversity conference convened with governments to agree and adopt the historic UN Global Biodiversity Framework. The most significant goal within this framework is to protect at least 30% of land and ocean areas globally by 2030 – especially areas of importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people. We must conserve these biodiversity-rich sites through effective, equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and "other effective area-based conservation measures".

In early 2023, the UN – with its 100 member states – signed a landmark High Seas Treaty, ushering in new rules to protect two-thirds of the ocean to safeguard ocean biodiversity from harmful activities. The high seas spread beyond all country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) – outside national boundaries – and represent areas with limited monitoring and control despite covering 60% of the ocean. The UN High Seas Treaty decision is crucial to marine conservation and to ensure we have fish for the future.

Only 5.4% of the ocean in South Africa is protected within our EEZ. There is much more work needed to reach the international goal of 30% of our ocean waters being protected. WWF South Africa contributes to improving the sustainability of our oceans through various initiatives. The South African Marine Protected Areas Network (SAMPAN) supports government departments and conservation authorities in finding solutions for expansion of marine protected areas (MPAs) and improving the management effectiveness and equitable management of existing MPAs.

WWF's Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (WWF-SASSI) works with different role players in the seafood value chain. Its outreach empowers and educates consumers, seafood suppliers and retailers, local fishers and the fishing industry to be informed about the science behind the sustainability status of various types of seafoods, the environmental impacts of different fishing methods and how to use this information to make informed decisions that benefit the oceans. WWF-SASSI works to deter harmful fishing practices including illegal fishing, overfishing, unintended bycatch and habitat destruction. For those fisheries working on improving their practices, WWF supports the implementation of fishery improvement projects (FIPs) that aim to enable fisheries to be more responsible and employ global best practices.

Through the different initiatives that WWF-SASSI has in place, it is making a positive impact by ensuring that the local seafood sector is enabled and committed to working towards employing responsible practices that safeguard our marine resources and ecosystems.

**5.4%**  
**OF THE OCEAN IN  
SOUTH AFRICA  
IS PROTECTED  
WITHIN OUR EEZ**

**Craig Smith**

Senior Manager: Marine Portfolio, WWF South Africa

# THE BUSINESS OF SUSTAINABILITY

In the next ten years, the World Economic Forum estimates that the top four risks to the global economy will be environmental in nature. These top four risks are failure to mitigate climate change, failure of climate change adaptation, natural disasters and extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse.

Navigating this scenario means that the world needs the private sector to do its part to mitigate climate change by investing in a sustainable blue economy, supporting blue carbon efforts and helping to build local, resilient supply chains. Every business needs to do its part in reducing its carbon footprint and investing in restoring nature while making the transition easier for consumers by supplying responsibly sourced foods. WWF works closely with businesses within the seafood sector starting with the WWF-coordinated coalition, the Responsible Fisheries Alliance (RFA). The alliance brings together seafood suppliers, fishing companies and NGOs to collaborate on ways to help ensure that South Africa has healthy marine ecosystems which underpin a robust seafood industry.

Then, through the WWF-SASSI Retailer/Supplier Participation Scheme, we help retailers attain their seafood sustainability goals through this voluntary platform. This scheme, which has been operating for 15 years, engages South Africa's top seafood vendors – including five of the six big retailers in South Africa – to facilitate the adoption of sustainable seafood practices within their supply chains. The scheme works towards long-term changes that will protect vital marine ecosystems and build resilient seafood supply chains, thereby enabling a positive shift in consumers' seafood choices, supporting coastal communities and improving food security.

Through WWF-SASSI tools and social platforms, we are also bringing awareness to consumers about the “green, orange or red” WWF-SASSI status of seafood species they are choosing, while simultaneously ensuring that the retailers are promoting this message and procuring responsibly sourced seafood. We are also active in the hospitality sector, through WWF-SASSI's chef ambassador project where we acknowledge and upskill chefs who are adhering to their decision to only source and cook with sustainable seafood.

Now more than ever, when buying seafood at the fish counter or ordering seafood from the menu, consumers are asking three WWF-SASSI questions of their local supermarket or seafood supplier and waiter at restaurants they visit: *what species is this, where is it from and how was it caught/farmed?*

Through the scheme, WWF-SASSI also ensures that its participants are actively asking – and providing answers to – those same three questions to offer transparency for their customers. We do this through foundational training for participants' key teams and front-of-house staff who frequently engage with seafood-buying customers.

Our participants continue to demonstrate their belief in sustainability. We are committed to partnering with them towards collectively transforming the seafood supply chain and helping them make responsible decisions on what's best for the ocean's future and their businesses, because sustainability makes good business sense!

**Justin Smith**

Head of Business Development, WWF South Africa

**TOP 4  
RISKS  
TO GLOBAL  
ECONOMY  
WILL BE  
ENVIRONMENTAL**



## MEET THE WWF-SASSI TEAM



**JUSTIN SMITH**

Head of Business Development Unit

Justin holds a BCom Law, LLB and BCom Honours in Financial and Risk Management from the University of Pretoria. He also received a LLM in Environmental Law and International Economic Law from the University of South Africa. Justin joined WWF in 2017 as the Head of the Business Development Unit. He leads fundraising, corporate engagement, marketing and sustainable finance activities for the organisation. Prior to WWF, Justin spent over 15 years driving corporate sustainability programmes at Woolworths, Nedbank and Standard Bank.



**CRAIG SMITH**

Senior Manager: Marine Portfolio

Craig holds a BSc degree in Zoology, and Ocean and Atmospheric Science, a BSc (Honours) degree in Marine Biology and a MSc degree in Zoology from the University of Cape Town. For almost 20 years, he worked in various capacities at the then Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. His focus has been on fisheries science and fisheries management. Craig joined WWF in 2018 as the Senior Manager of the Marine Portfolio. He provides leadership on promoting sustainable fishing practices, regenerative fisheries value chains, small-scale fisheries stewardship, marine protected area (MPA) expansion and MPA management effectiveness.



**PAVITRAY PILLAY**

Environmental Behaviour Change Practitioner and WWF-SASSI Manager

Pavs holds a BSc from the University of Witwatersrand with majors in Zoology and Archaeology and a minor in Palaeontology. She received an Honours and a MSc degree in Marine Biology from the University of Cape Town. Pavs joined WWF in 2015 as the Manager of WWF's Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (WWF-SASSI). She works on how to use behavioural science and effective communications to shift consumer choices towards sustainable seafood and help transform the seafood market in South Africa.



**KOLOBE MMONWA**

Senior Marine Scientist

Kolobe is a fishery scientist with a PhD in Marine Biology from Makhanda (Rhodes) University and a Master of Business Administration from the Management College of Southern Africa. Kolobe joined WWF in 2022 as a Senior Marine Scientist to oversee scientific assessments of our seafood species on the WWF-SASSI list.



**DELSY SIFUNDZA**

Marine Scientist and RFA Coordinator

Delsy holds a BSc in Zoology and Ichthyology and Fisheries Science, a BSc in Ichthyology and Fisheries Science and a MSc in Ichthyology, all from Makhanda (Rhodes) University. Delsy joined WWF in 2019 as a graduate intern. Her work at WWF includes WWF-SASSI species assessments and coordinating the Responsible Fisheries Alliance (RFA).



**ALEXANDRA AZEVEDO**

WWF-SASSI Market Transformation Officer

Alexandra has a BSc in Environmental Earth Science and Sustainability from Miami University and a MSc degree in Applied Marine Biology from the University of Cape Town. Her expertise lies within fisheries and marine conservation. Alexandra is the new WWF-SASSI Market Transformation Officer.



**KIRTANYA MAHARAJ**

WWF Project Officer

Kirtanya holds a BSc from the University of Cape Town (UCT) with majors in Applied Biology and Ecology and Evolution. She received an Honours and a MSc in Biological Science, also from UCT, whilst also engaging in practical environmental initiatives. Kirtanya joined WWF in 2017 as a graduate intern. She is now a WWF Project Officer focusing on science communication and behaviour change campaigns for WWF-SASSI and other sustainable consumption initiatives.

## EXTERNAL PANEL REVIEWERS FOR WWF-SASSI ASSESSMENTS

**Ms Andrea Angel**, Albatross Task Force Manager at BirdLife South Africa

**Dr Colin Attwood**, Associate Professor at the University of Cape Town (UCT)

**Dr Deon Durholtz**, Researcher at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment

**Dr Johann Augustyn**, Secretary at the South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association

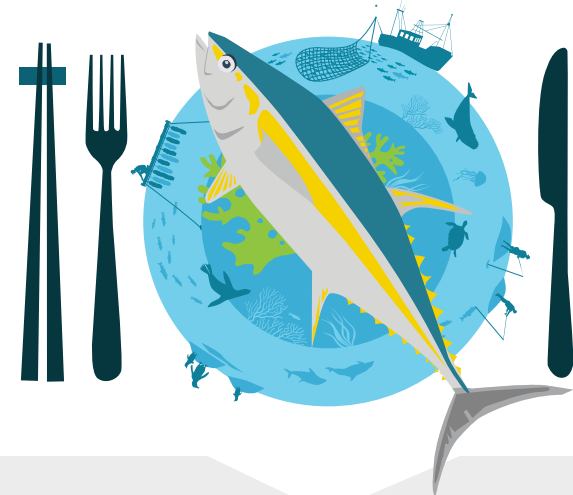
**Dr Kerry Sink**, Principal Marine Scientist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute

**Dr Kevern Cochrane**, Emeritus Professor at Makhanda (Rhodes) University

**Dr Lara Atkinson**, Marine Offshore Researcher at the South African Environmental Observation Network

**Dr Sven Kerwath**, Specialty Scientist at the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Honorary Associate Professor at UCT and Research Associate at Stellenbosch University

# WHY WE NEED AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES

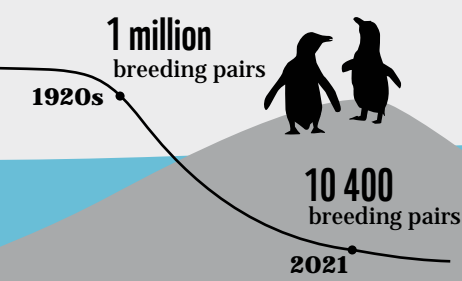


If not properly managed, fisheries can damage marine ecosystems. Those intimately connected with fish and fishing are increasingly understanding the importance of the wider ecosystem to the health and dynamics of fish stocks. The revised need to manage fisheries within the context of their ecosystems is now globally accepted as the preferred manner of managing fisheries.

## WHAT IS AN EAF AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

An ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) management seeks to protect and enhance the marine ecosystem health, on which life and human benefits depend. This approach depends on balancing the diverse needs and values of both present and future generations. In many cases fish targeted by a particular fishery is also caught by another fishery or can impact another fishery by affecting a component of the ecosystem, for example, prey of another species. An EAF will need to be able to manage these interactions. If we wish to maintain the overall health of marine ecosystems, we need to reduce impacts of fisheries on these systems as a whole. This will require an understanding of trophic links, diets and energetic requirements of different components of the ecosystem. There is also a need to quantify impacts on vulnerable species and sensitive habitats.

African penguins have declined at an alarming rate of more than **95%**



## POSITIVE ACTIONS TO ENSURE HEALTHY OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS



### Integrated policy and decision-making with an ecosystem approach

This includes the Marine Living Resources Act 18 of 1998, which intends to provide for the conservation of the marine ecosystem, long-term sustainable utilisation of marine living resources and the orderly access to exploitation, utilisation and protection of certain marine natural resources.



### Responsible wild-capture fishing and aquaculture farming



### Species in diverse marine habitats and part of interconnected food webs



### Responsible ecotourism and a portion of proceeds for marine conservation



### Responsible menu offerings and consumer education about seafood dishes

- ✓ What species is it?
- ✓ Where does it come from?
- ✓ How was it caught/farmed?



### Responsible procurement, consumer awareness of sustainable seafood and accurate ecolabels

- ✓ What species is it?
- ✓ Where does it come from?
- ✓ How was it caught/farmed?



## Penguins as an ecosystem indicator

Since the 1920s, the African penguin's population has drastically decreased by 95% from historical levels in the wild. Recently, the main driver of the population collapse of this seabird is the issue of food scarcity. Penguins' primary source of food is sardines. Over the years, the sardine stock has steadily declined and is far too low off South Africa's West Coast to support the endangered African penguin population.

One of the primary interventions that will allow the African penguin populations to rebound is reducing fishing pressure on their food resources. If the penguin's population continues decreasing at the same rate, there is an estimation that by 2035 the species will be functionally extinct (not enough breeding pairs). A more pressing concern is that this decline clearly indicates a much bigger ecosystem issue. Therefore, fishing suppliers and retailers need to work towards saving the African penguin and collaborating on improving their main prey item, the stock status of sardines.

### Environmentally friendly recreational ocean activities

### Sustainable coastal livelihoods and local food security

## POSITIVE ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS: Improve fish stocks, protect marine biodiversity and promote long-term ocean health and human well-being





## TRACKING PERFORMANCE

# PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS

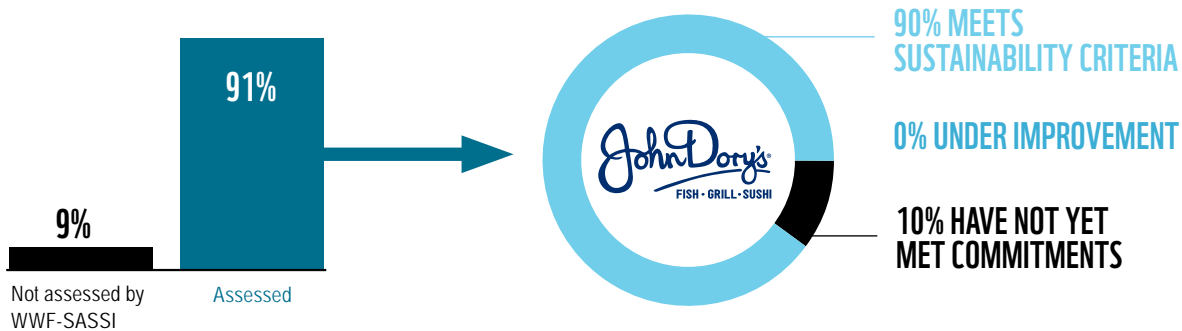
In the pages that follow, we show each participant's progress towards their seafood sustainability commitments. The graphs depict the volume and species that they have procured in 2022 as well as their progress since joining the WWF-SASSI Retailer/Supplier Participation Scheme. And at the top of each participant's page is their response to a crucial question: *why is sustainable seafood important to your business?*

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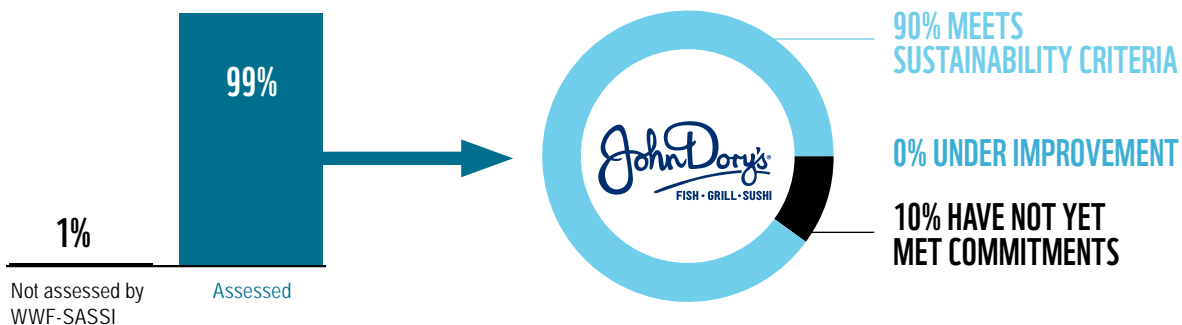
# JOHN DORY'S

As a primarily seafood-offering brand, John Dory's remains committed to procuring well-managed sustainably sourced fish and shellfish. Overfishing, pollution and climate change place our oceans at great risk which makes this commitment even more important as we work towards securing sustainable supply well into the future. In partnership with WWF-SASSI and Spur Group's procurement team, John Dory's remains vigilant in selling green-listed species at competitive pricing, while supporting consumer needs and environmental criteria.

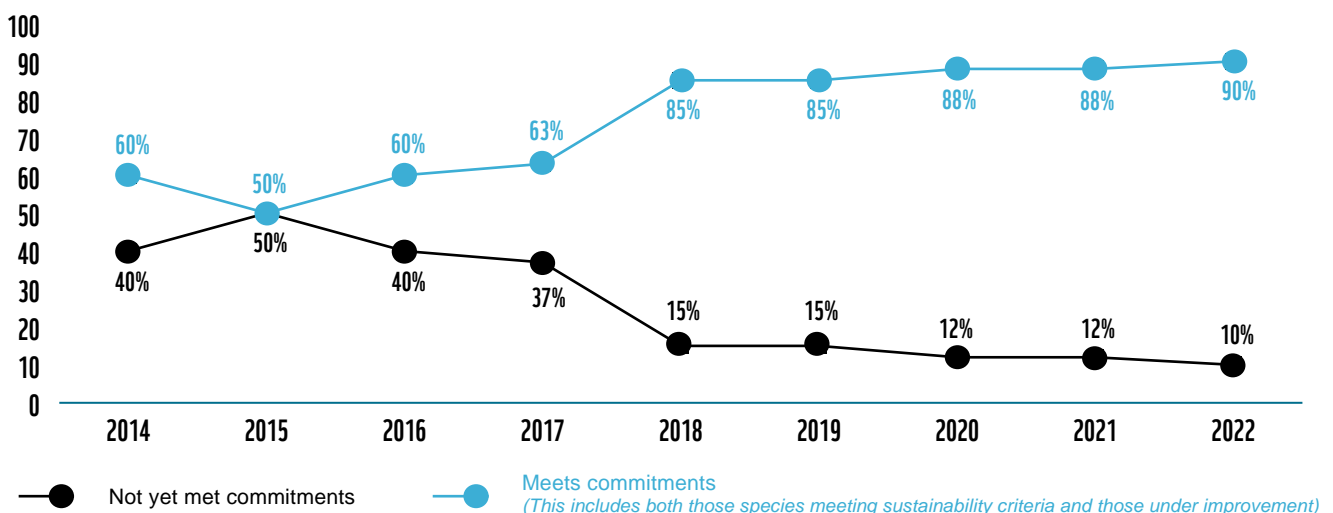
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## JOHN DORY'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)





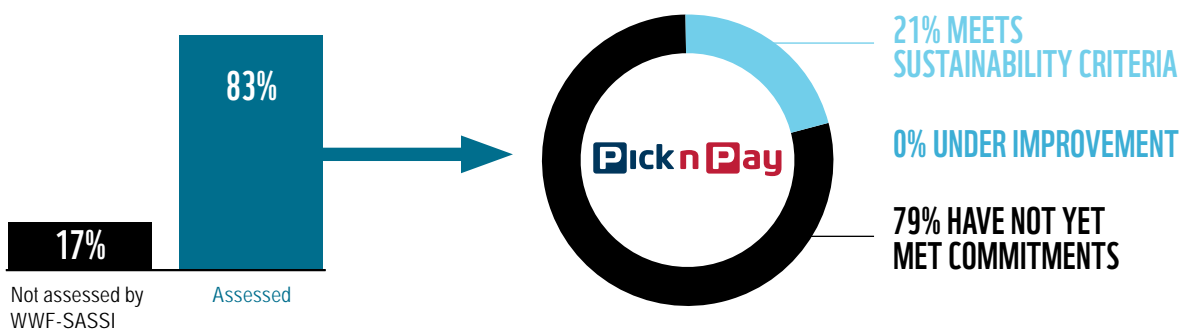
# PICK N PAY

Pick n Pay has a commitment not only to our customers but also to sustaining our country's oceans and coastlines. South Africa is strongly influenced by the characteristics of its oceans, as they are an important source of protein and income for many. So, it is imperative that we as a company focus on the sustainable sourcing of all our seafood products that we have available in stores, ensuring we source the very best whilst protecting our marine life at the same time. Our oceans and coastlines are under consistent threat, and we need to protect these as best we can. We are proud to join forces with WWF-SASSI, solidifying our commitment to ensuring that 100% of the seafood we offer is sustainably sourced by 2025, doing our part in safeguarding our oceans for generations to come.

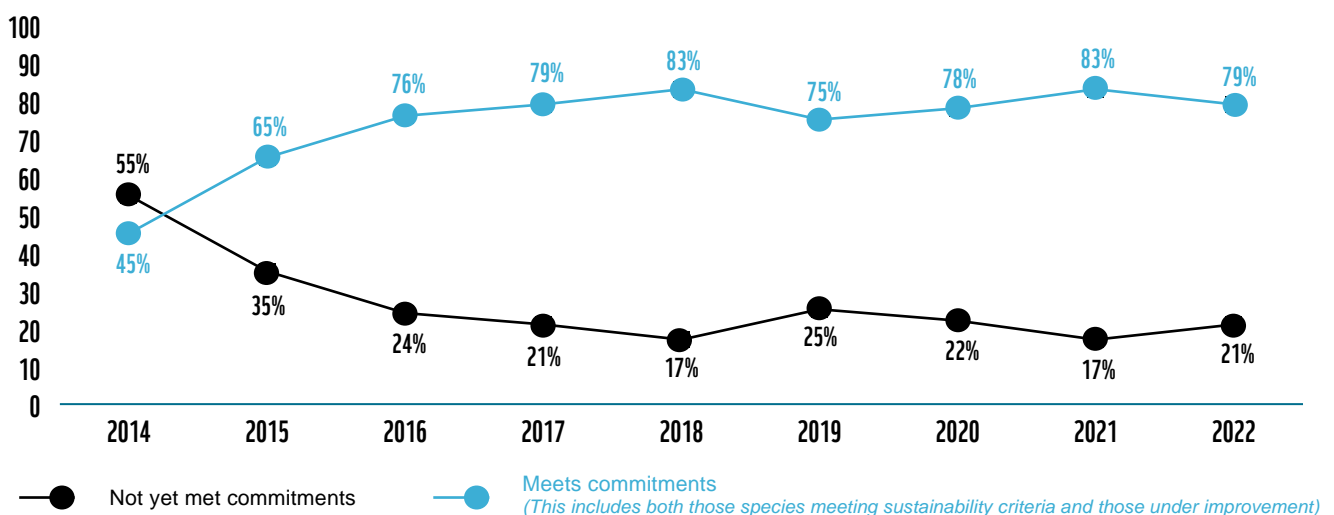
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## PNP'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)



# FOOD LOVER'S MARKET

Our oceans provide so much to this world, from the underworld forests to livelihoods that depend on them to the incredible natural beauty and abundant biodiversity that resides in them. Our oceans, however, are under threat, from polluted runoff due to plastification, rising temperatures to overfishing. At Food Lover's Market, we understand we have a role to play in the protection of this vast expanse which connects us all, a responsibility to ensure that we are honest in our approach and that we use our business operations not just to minimise damage, but in fact to enhance the ecosystems that are so fundamental to life on Earth.

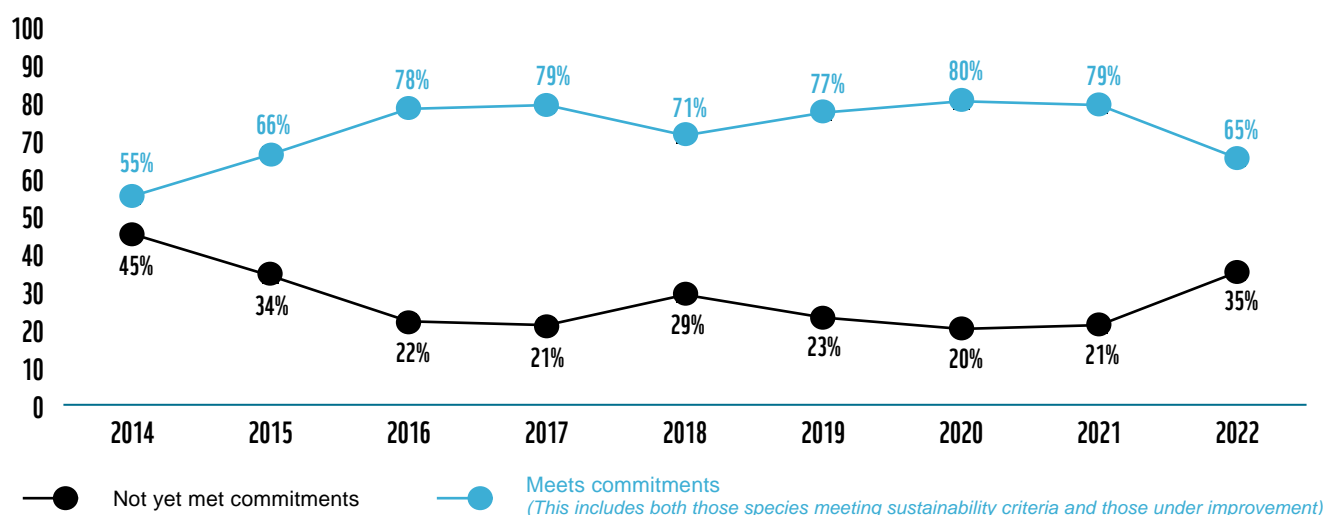
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## FOOD LOVER'S MARKET'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)



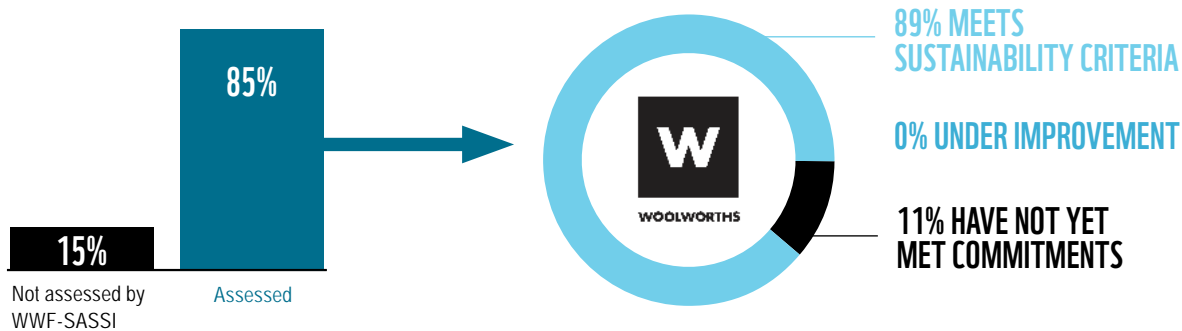
Revised strategies: [www.foodloversmarket.co.za/earth-lovers-the-heart-of-our-business/](http://www.foodloversmarket.co.za/earth-lovers-the-heart-of-our-business/)



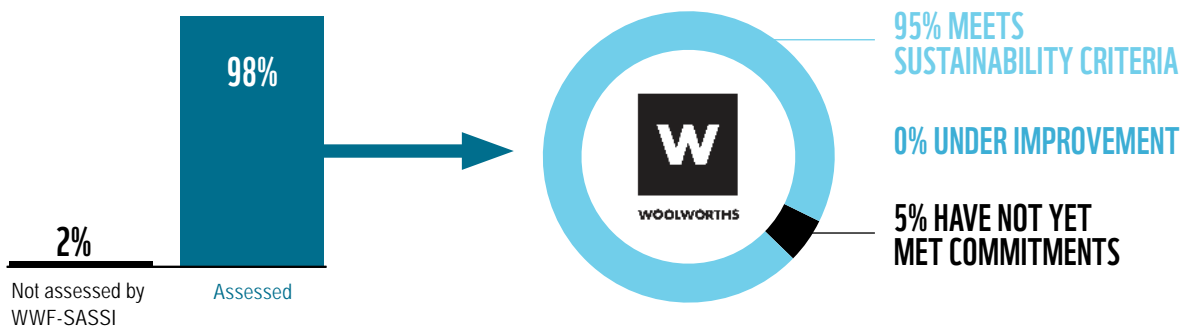
# WOOLWORTHS

Woolworths' vision is to be one of the world's most responsible retailers, and we believe that seafood is a key part of a healthy and sustainable global food future. We advance ocean stewardship and sustainable seafood because we care about the well-being of society and the planet. Seafood makes critical contributions to food and nutrition security, with fisheries and aquaculture also supporting millions of livelihoods. At the same time, improvements in fisheries and aquaculture sustainability management have been proven to successfully rebuild fishery stocks, protect biodiversity and safeguard ecosystems.

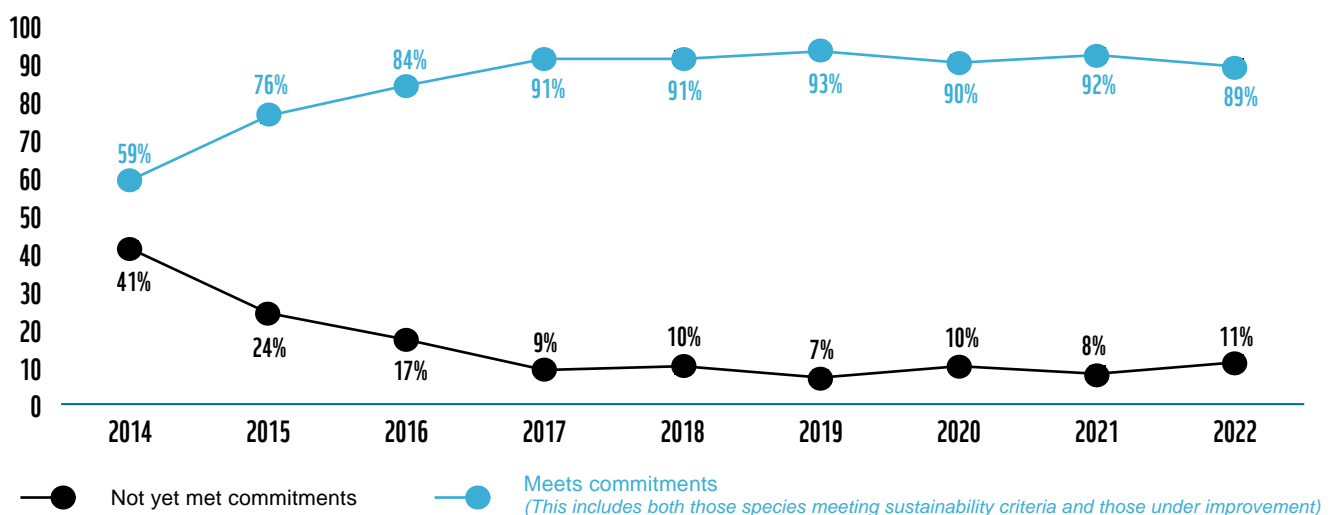
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



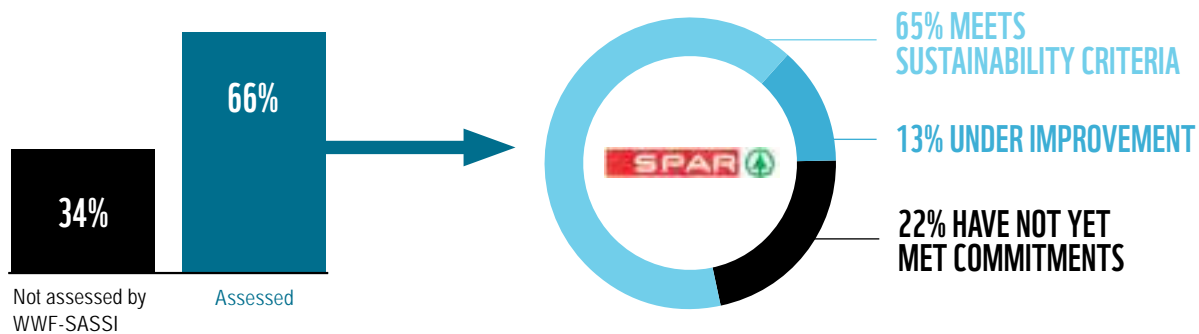
## WOOLWORTHS' PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)



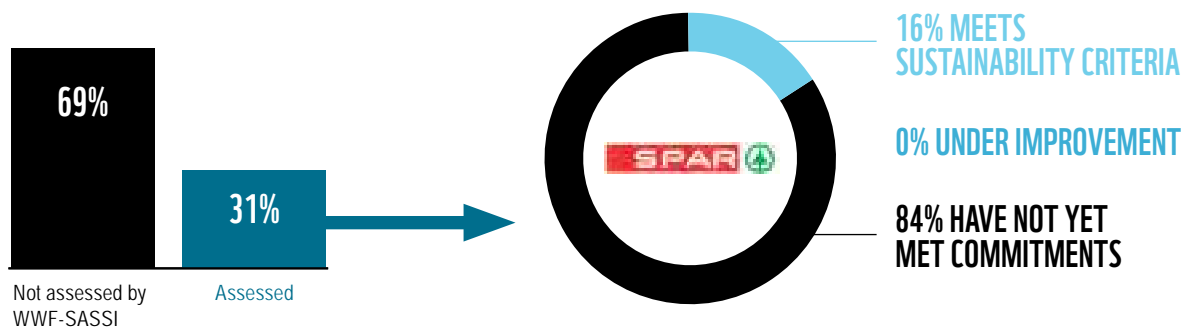
# THE SPAR GROUP LIMITED

SPAR acknowledges the role we must play in ensuring the sustainability of our food system. SPAR is committed to ensuring that our seafood is responsibly procured and supports sustainable and well-managed fisheries and aquaculture operations. Traceability, transparency and safety are integral in responsible sourcing at SPAR. We continue working closely with WWF-SASSI and stakeholders across our supply chain to protect our marine ecosystems and provide our consumers with affordable and nutritious food.

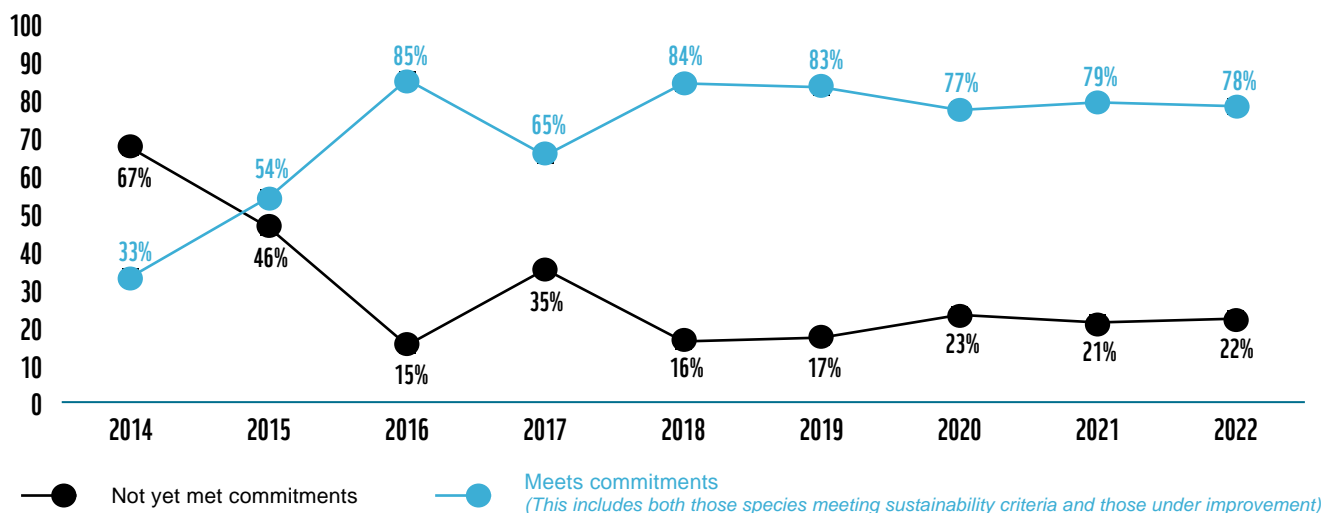
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## SPAR'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)

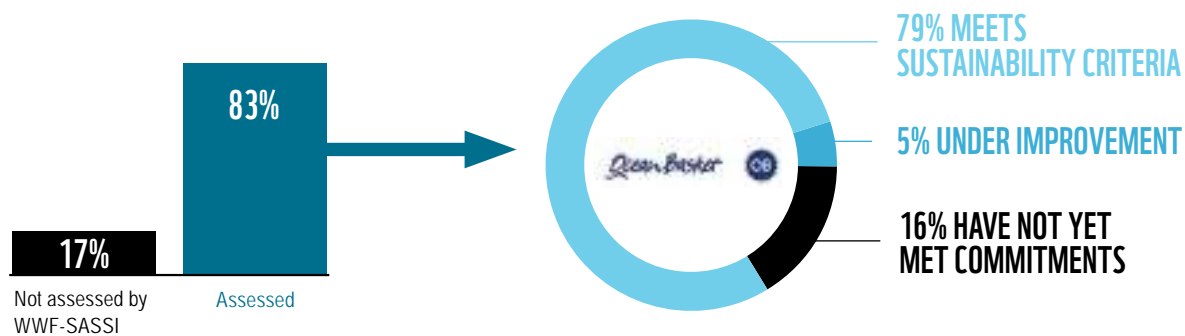




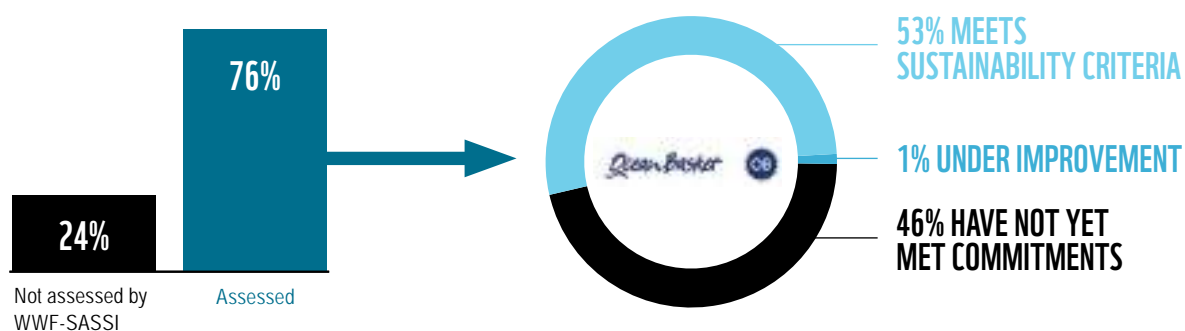
# OCEAN BASKET

Ocean Basket is committed to being a responsible ocean citizen. Our sourcing protocols include clear guidelines on the criteria needed to hold this commitment true, from working with suppliers who follow fishing regulations to working with production factories who have a responsible philosophy for sourcing seafood products.

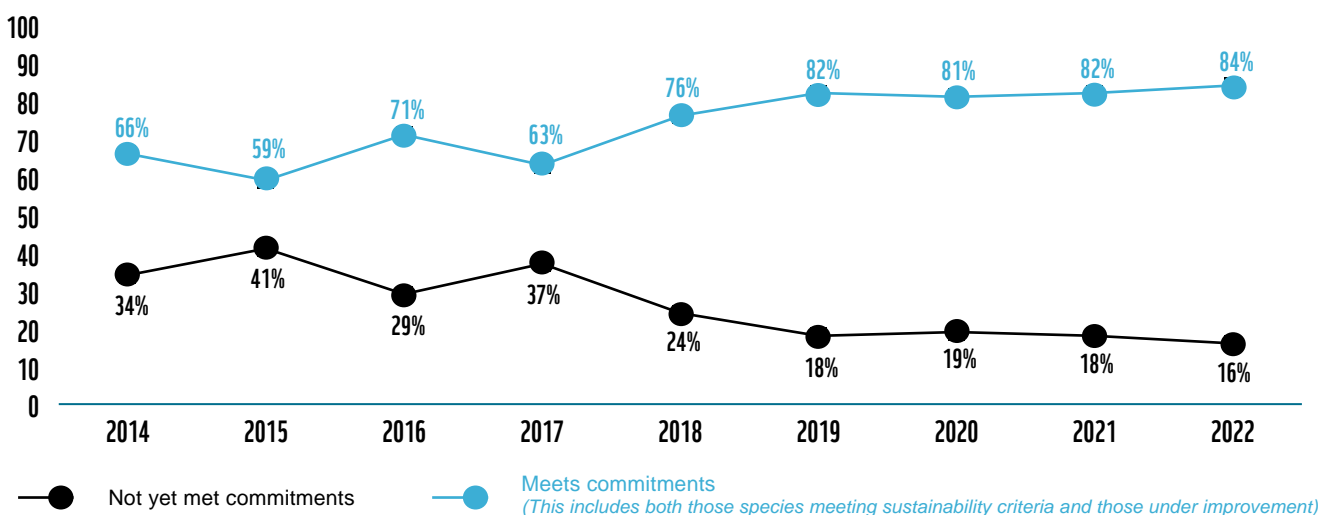
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## OCEAN BASKET'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)



# SHOPRITE HOLDINGS GROUP

The Shoprite Group's partnership with WWF-SASSI promotes the procurement and consumption of sustainable seafood. It informs our approach to sustainable seafood, and we remain committed to WWF-SASSI's voluntary compliance framework for procuring seafood products. In the year under review, together with WWF, we expanded sustainability training to all our fishery suppliers to ensure that our supply chain understands and is aware of the importance of the processes and different practices that involve sourcing sustainable seafood. We are actively adjusting our species for all ranges to stay within the given parameters to reach our WWF-SASSI goals.

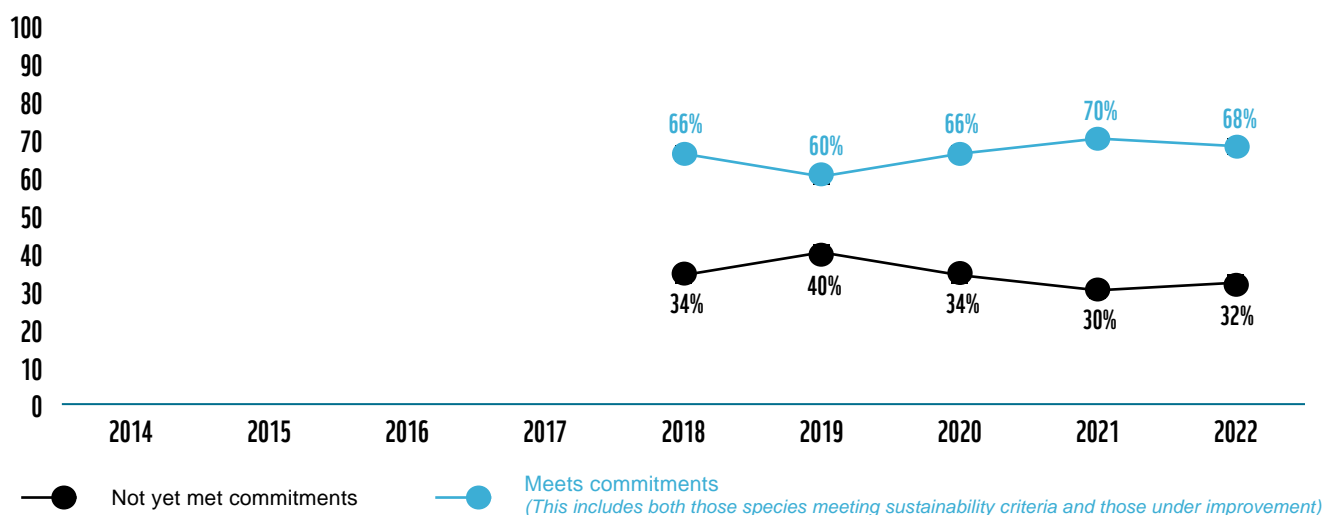
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## SHOPRITE HOLDINGS GROUP'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)





# ATLANTIS FOODS GROUP

Changes in fish stocks necessitate changes in how we manage sustainable fishing and procurement practices. Through our continued collaboration with WWF-SASSI, our partnership with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and our partner factories' MSC and ASC certification, we strive to make positive choices. Atlantis Foods Group is committed to continuing our sustainable seafood initiatives and practices.

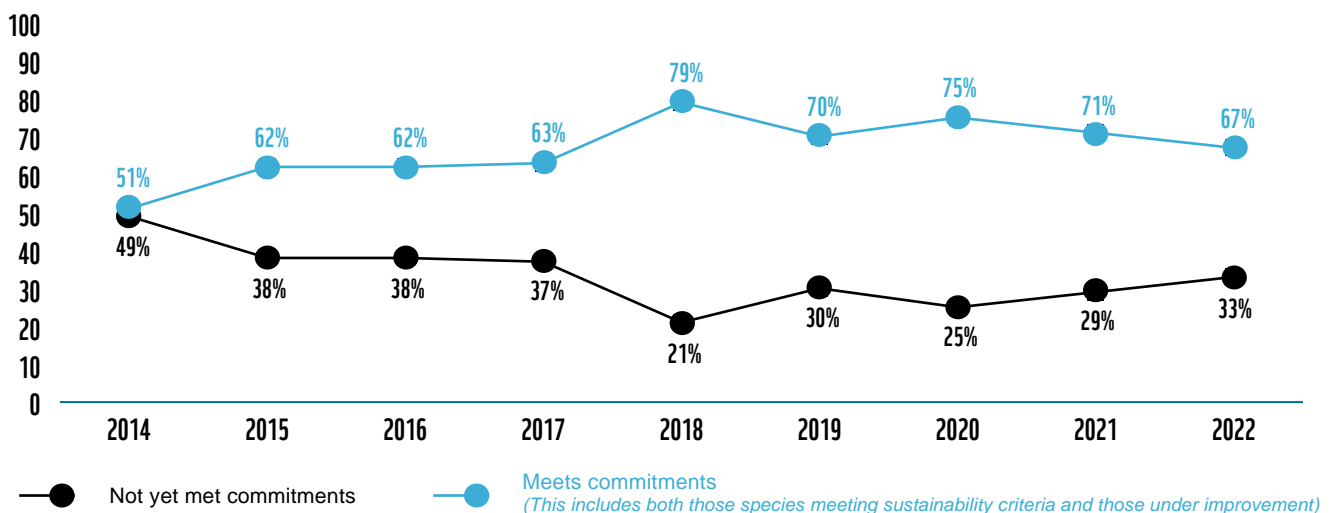
## PROGRESS BY SPECIES



## PROGRESS BY VOLUME



## ATLANTIS FOODS GROUP'S PROGRESS THROUGH THE YEARS (SPECIES)





## TRANSFORMING THE MARKET

# DEMAND AND DRIVERS

More than ever, due to increased consumer awareness, people are making informed seafood choices depending on its sustainability status. There are opportunities to educate and provide information to your customers in new ways and WWF-SASSI is here to help.



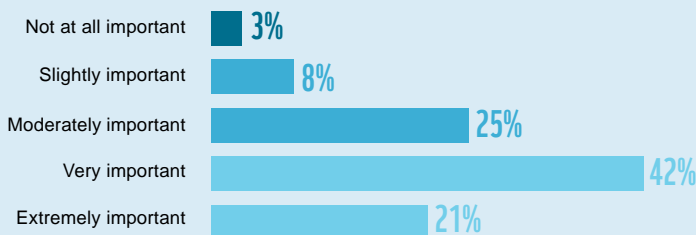
# HOW CONSUMERS ARE DEMANDING SUSTAINABILITY

A 2022 WWF-SASSI consumer survey found that 63% of consumers believe that sustainable seafood is important to them – 42% saying it is very important and 21% stating it is extremely important.

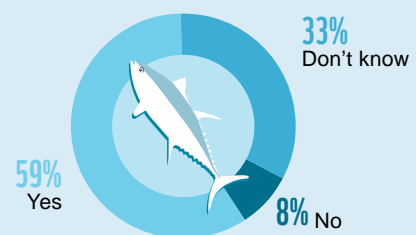
Another interesting response is that two-thirds (59%) of consumers actively eat sustainable seafood, whereas one third (33%) did not know. Over the years, with increased awareness of the state of our oceans and vulnerable marine species, this number will keep climbing and it is important for retailers to adhere to consumer demands.

When asked what would help consumers make it easier to choose sustainable seafood, the responses show how there is an opportunity for retailers and seafood suppliers to teach their consumers about sustainable seafood. They can do this by providing the necessary information about what species it is, where it is from and how it was caught/farmed. WWF-SASSI participants can do this through packaging and eco-labelling, a consistent drive to ensure well-trained staff, information awareness through media and more. All these are things that WWF-SASSI can assist with and why partnerships within the scheme are more crucial as ever.

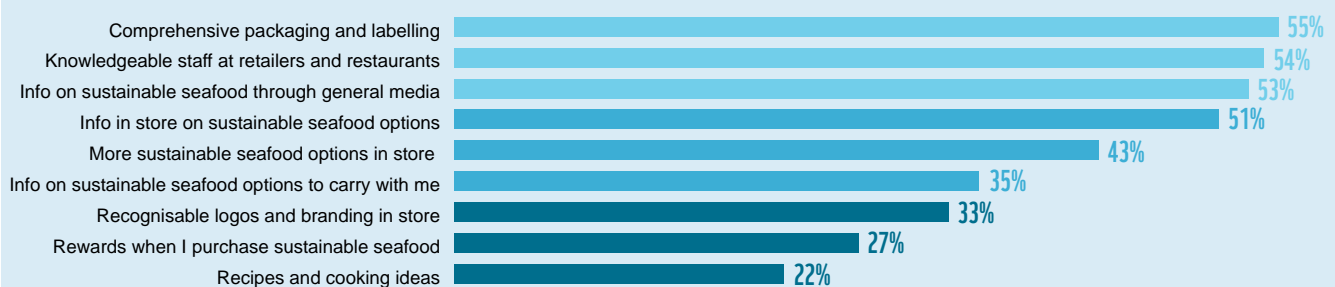
## IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMING SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD



## CURRENT CONSUMPTION OF SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD



## WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO CONSUME SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD?



Source: WWF-SASSI Consumer survey 2022

# HOW LEADERS IN THE INDUSTRY CAN DRIVE SUSTAINABILITY

The WWF-SASSI participants are in the unique and exciting position to not only deliver on their seafood sustainability commitments and change their operations but to transform their supply chains, raise the entire seafood sector and influence significant positive changes in the fishing industry and in our oceans.

## HERE ARE 7 WAYS YOU CAN HELP TRANSFORM THE SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN IN SOUTH AFRICA:



1. Use the **correct labelling** on all seafood products.



2. **Demand transparency** from suppliers by asking the three WWF-SASSI questions:

- ✓ What species is it?
- ✓ Where is it from?
- ✓ How was it caught/farmed?



3. Have a seafood **traceability system** in place.



4. Collaboratively **support small-scale fishers** through market access and strengthening local supply chains.



5. Collaboratively **invest in fisheries improvement** projects to help improve fish stocks of key species.



6. Collectively **engage seafood suppliers** on responsible actions for key commodities such as linefish and prawns.



7. **Communicate and educate consumers** about sustainable seafood options through targeted awareness campaigns that can help shift consumer behaviour.

Together we can change the status quo to ensure a fully sustainable seafood market and help build market resilience through traceability, transparency and responsible business. A fully transformed seafood supply chain can lead to improved fish stocks and enough sustainable seafood on our plates for generations to come. For Nature. For You.

# OUR COMMITMENTS TO YOU

Already 15 years into this scheme, it is more important than ever that we do the work now. To support you in working towards your commitments, WWF-SASSI has four commitments for our participants:

1. Developing an **approach and policy for unassessed species**.
2. **Reviewing ecolabels**, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and equivalent certification standards.
3. **Refining the organisational assessment system** to establish precise goals accompanied by well-defined timelines.
4. Promoting a stronger emphasis on **recognising the importance of adopting an ecosystem approach** to fisheries management, particularly in light of the imminent revision of the Marine Living Resources Act and the growing strain on marine species caused by the impacts of climate change.

**We will support your sustainability goals and encourage collaborative action amongst all WWF-SASSI participants.**







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## THE WWF-SASSI TOOLS



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[wwf.org.za/sassi](http://wwf.org.za/sassi)



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# EVERY FISH IS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY THE ONE ON YOUR PLATE!



Lasting positive outcomes for people and nature in the places where we work and from priority environmental challenges we focus on.

FOR NATURE. FOR YOU.

[www.wwf.org.za](http://www.wwf.org.za)

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